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THE INCARNATE GLORY

AN EXPOSITORY STUDY OF THE
BIBLE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

CHRIST'S VIEW OF THE
KINGDOM OF GOD

THE INCARNATE GLORY

With an Introduction by
Rev. H. R. Mackintosh, D.D.
London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.
1914

PRINTED BY
JAMES CLARK & CO. LIMITED
25, ABchurch Lane, LONDON, E.C. 4

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

CHRIST'S VIEW OF THE
KINGDOM OF GOD

A Study in Jewish Apocalyptic and in the
Mind of Jesus Christ

Bruce Lectures

With an Introductory Note by
PROFESSOR H. R. MACKINTOSH, D.D.

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THE INCARNATE GLORY

AN EXPOSITORY STUDY OF THE
GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

BY

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PROFESSOR OF NEW TESTAMENT LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE, KNOX COLLEGE, TORONTO
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Printed in Great Britain

Preface

The practical aim of the volume to which the several volumes belong does not permit of any extensive treatment of the critical questions raised by the Fourth Gospel. Nevertheless, as some preliminary acquaintance with those questions is undoubtedly necessary to the full and proper understanding of the book, I have judged that an introductory chapter containing in brief outline the main lines of a critical approach to the Gospel must not be out of place. Readers who desire a more extensive discussion may turn to the New Testament Introductions of Abbot, Jelf, and Zahn, or to some of the special monographs on the Fourth Gospel mentioned at the end of the volume. Particular mention should be made of Prof. Bornay's *Ancient Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (1927), a work which is certainly likely to exercise a commanding influence on subsequent studies for some considerable time to come. The writer desires to acknowledge a special debt of gratitude to this work, and to the various contributions to *Journal of Theology* of Prof. E. W. Bacon, and



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Preface

least to his survey of the New Testament field of thought in his *Jesus and Paul* (1922).

The main part of the present volume is exegetical, and here, while I have followed for the most part an independent line of study, I am conscious of a special debt to the great commentary of H. J. Holtzmann, revised by W. Bauer (1908), which remains perhaps the most adequate exposition of the mind of the Fourth Evangelist. I have felt that the Synoptic Gospels and St. Paul afford the natural line of approach to the Fourth Gospel, and for this reason references to Philo and to Hellenistic Judaism occur but sparingly in the following pages. The Fourth Gospel contains nothing of that Alexandrian terminology which figures so remarkably in writings like Colossians or the Epistle to the Hebrews : on the other hand, we are constantly driven back upon the Synoptics and upon the experience of St. Paul for the true illustration or counterpart of Johannine ideas. Some attempt to trace this connection of ideas is made in the following chapters. I have sought to show that the Fourth Gospel is not an abstract or speculative production, but is vitally related not only to Christian religious experience, but to the practical aims of the Christian mission. The apologetic for Christianity which the book contains is by no means purely theoretical, but is sustained throughout by the pressure of a vital

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religious experience. As a matter of fact, the thesis to which the whole Gospel is dedicated is that Christianity represents a new discovery and experience of the living God. No New Testament writing is so essentially opposed to traditionalism, or so essentially inspired by faith in the Spirit. The followers of Montanus certainly erred in the direction which their enthusiasm took, but they made no mistake when they saw in the Fourth Gospel a supreme defence of spiritual liberty.

My sincerest thanks are due to my colleague, Prof. Richard Davidson, D.D., who has read the proofs, and assisted me with many valuable suggestions.

W. MANSON.

Knox College, Toronto.

June, 1923.

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CHAPTER I

The Approach to the Fourth Gospel

I. THE "SPIRITUAL" GOSPEL

IN passing from the Synoptic Gospels to the later work which bears the name of John, the reader is conscious of entering into a new atmosphere. It is as if he had turned from some busy street of the world's life and entered the quiet spaces of some cathedral close. The language to which he has hitherto listened has given place to a solemn and elevated recitative, in which mystical terms like Word of God, Lamb of God, Birth from Above, Life in Christ, Oneness with the Father and with the Son, keep falling on the ear. The green hills and shores of Galilee amid which he has hitherto followed the steps of the Son of Man have to a large extent been exchanged for the grey courts and precincts of Jerusalem and of the Temple. Above all, there is a certain alteration in the aspect of the Saviour Himself. The variety, the objectivity, the swiftness, the unconstrainedness, the manifold light and shadow of the Synoptic representation have given place to a certain monotone of speech and action. Jesus

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no longer speaks in the brief pointed ethical sentences with which Mark, Matthew and Luke have made us familiar, but in set discourses, abstract in character, abounding in enigmatic allusions, and bearing constantly on His relation to the Father, or on mysteries of faith like the Spirit and the sacraments. In His action also, Jesus stands farther apart from the world of men than in the Synoptics. His will is not to the same extent affected by human motives. And from the beginning of His ministry He appears in the full light of His Messianic glory, speaking and acting as the Son of God who has come down from Heaven, the Eternal Word who was in the beginning with God.

These characteristics, and the pronounced theological tendency of the Fourth Gospel inevitably raise the question of its relation to the other Gospels and to the facts of Jesus' life. In what sense is this most hallowed and beloved of Christian writings a true representation of Jesus Christ? One of the earliest and most instructive attempts to answer this question is indicated in a tradition which Clement of Alexandria cites from older authorities to the effect that "After the other evangelists had imparted the *corporeal* Gospel, John, at the instigation of his friends and in the might of inspiration, created a *spiritual* Gospel."¹ According to this view the special distinction of the Fourth Gospel

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vi. 14.

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is constituted by its profound insight into the inward or eternal meaning of the revelation made in Jesus. Whereas the Synoptists have given us an external history of the Saviour, framed to a large extent in material forms of thought, John presents the eternal meaning, the truths or ideas underlying the history, the soul of the gospel rather than the body. It is not asserted or implied in this judgment that the Fourth Gospel has less objective value than the others. Indeed from the Alexandrian standpoint the opposite would be argued: it would be contended that the Fourth Gospel by its profounder insight into underlying causes comes nearer than the Synoptics to being a real history of Christ.

The judgment to which the school of Alexandria thus gives its *imprimatur* is on general grounds entitled to profound respect. It need not, and ought not to be assumed *a priori* that the Synoptists have given us the whole truth regarding Jesus of Nazareth. It need not, and ought not to be supposed that the Synoptic manner is the only manner in which the life and words of Jesus could be truthfully portrayed. Much depends in this matter on the character, mind, and point of view of the persons making the original observations. If, as there exists much reason to believe, the special matter of the Fourth Gospel rests, in whole or in part, on the authority or testimony of an eyewitness, who saw Jesus from an unusual angle, and

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brought special gifts of mind and heart to the interpretation of what he saw, we have to recognise it as *possible* that the Synoptic Gospels, incomparably vivid and convincing in outward details as they are, have not taken the full measure of the mind of Jesus or of the truth disclosed by Him. The original facts may have left room for, and indeed demanded just such an inward and mystical interpretation as the Fourth Gospel provides. In other words, the theological or inward tendency of the Fourth Gospel is not *per se* a proof that this Gospel is, in the highest sense of the term, less historical than the others.

On the other hand, certain features in the Fourth Gospel, and particularly in the discourses of Christ, show that it does not possess the same measure of *external historicity* as the Synoptics. It depends much more than they do on the free exercise of a reflective or interpretative faculty.

It would not be right, indeed, to represent the other Gospels as, in comparison with the Fourth, purely objective narratives. They, too, involve besides external history a subjective or interpretative element. They present Jesus, not as seen merely by the outward eye, but as revealed by the Spirit to *faith*. Not that this, rightly understood, detracts from their historical value, inasmuch as true history always involves a subjective as well as an objective factor. In the last analysis the fact or reality,

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from which the evangelists start, consists not merely of the things which were said or done by Jesus, but of the impression which these words and deeds produced on witnesses anxious to give the whole truth of what had been experienced. We may dismiss from view the idea that the witnesses or the evangelists conceived themselves to be at liberty to add to the history anything that they did not believe to be there. Their interpretative function was confined to indicating or drawing out the meaning of data which they judged to need exposition in the light of the total evidence at their command. But even this left room for personal judgment, and the fact that the Synoptic Gospels to this extent involve a subjective strain disposes of the idea of an entire difference of principle between them and the Johannine Gospel.

On the other hand, it is not right to represent the Fourth Gospel as entirely subjective or inward in its aims. Whether or not he had in view Docetists like Cerinthus, who spiritualised away the human reality of the Saviour's life, asserting that the Divine One who appeared in Jesus descended only at His baptism, and withdrew before His Cross, the evangelist stakes everything on the truth that literally and historically the Logos became flesh, and made His dwelling with men. Nevertheless this insistence on the full historical reality of the Christ-life does not contradict the general truth

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of the judgment that the Fourth Gospel is less concerned with outward than with inward values. Its exposition of the mind of Jesus is affected to a greater extent than the Synoptic representation by a theological purpose, and depends more largely on the witness of the Spirit.

II. THE SYNOPTIC AND JOHANNINE REPRESENTATIONS

The Synoptic narrative, or—to confine ourselves to that one of the three Gospels which is by universal consent the earliest, and the main source of the other two—the Gospel according to Mark gives a history of Jesus which falls into two parts. In the first is described how Jesus, called as God's Son, and endowed with the Spirit at His baptism, testified, taught and healed in Galilee. In the second part is described how He appeared as Messiah in Jerusalem, and after rejection by the religious heads of the nation, was glorified by His death and resurrection.

Now, first, this Markan or Synoptic history recognises clearly a number of definite crises or turning-points in the life of Jesus, through which He passed to the full realisation of His divine vocation. Such are, for example, His Baptism, when His call as Messiah came to Him in the Voice from Heaven ; His Temptation, when the meaning and issues of the call were decided ; the Confession of Peter, following

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the rejection in Galilee, when Jesus laying aside His previous reserve announced His intention to go as Messiah to Jerusalem, and called on His disciples to leave all for His sake, taking even their lives in their hands; the Transfiguration, when the glory of Jesus as a *Suffering* Messiah was revealed in divine vision to His disciples; the Institution of the Supper, when after rejection in Jerusalem, and in immediate view of death, Jesus solemnly dedicated His life as a ransom for "many"; the Agony in the Garden, when the last decision was fought out to victory; lastly, the desolation on the Cross with the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" In John these crises are either entirely absent, or present only in shadow. The Baptism is alluded to, but the Wilderness Conflict is absent; the Confession of Peter does not mark a wholly new epoch in the history; there is no Transfiguration, no Institution of the Supper, no Agony in the Garden, no Cry of Desolation on the Cross. There is not the same recognition that it was through conflict and victory that Jesus realised His calling as the Son of God. How are these omissions of the Fourth Gospel to be judged? We may certainly explain them by saying that, as the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel appears from the beginning in His eternal character as Son of God, the incidents of time in the earthly life by which His consciousness was moulded and guided have lost something

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of their significance for the evangelist ; they are swallowed up, so to speak, in the light of His eternal glory, which shines evenly from the first page to the last. But just for this reason the Fourth Gospel—even if it be claimed for it that the deep underlying communion of Jesus with the Father, which it emphasises, was a more fundamental factor than the fluctuations or crises of consciousness, which it omits—has not the same measure of external historicity as the Synoptic Gospels. It has obscured a very important element in Jesus' realisation of His holy calling.

In the second place, Mark and the other Synoptists make a clear division between the Galilean and Jerusalem periods of Jesus' ministry. They delineate for us a Galilean activity followed by one momentous visit to Jerusalem in the course of which Jesus the Messiah, confronting the authorities in defence of the gospel of reconciliation which He had been anointed to proclaim, is set upon by His enemies and crucified. In John this simple analysis of the history is crossed by another which brings Jesus at least five times to Jerusalem, viz., for the Festivals of Passover, Pentecost,¹ Tabernacles, Dedication and Passover again. Not only so, but the great discourses of Jesus are grouped for the most part round these Feasts and round another Passover which falls while Jesus is in Galilee (vi. 4.) The

¹ If Pentecost was the Feast alluded to in Chap. v. 1.

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Galilean ministry is in fact only an episode in an activity which has Jerusalem for its source and base. With regard to these Jerusalem visits, which are so prominent a feature of the Fourth Gospel, it can scarcely be doubted that the evangelist was indebted to a special tradition of facts. There is every reason to believe, as we shall see, that the Gospel reflects the experience, and incorporates the testimony of someone who had a special connection with Jerusalem. Such a witness would naturally tell the story as it came within the ambient of his own experience. Moreover, it has to be remembered that the Synoptic history hangs after all by the single thread of Mark, whose scheme and outline Matthew and Luke have followed without essential alteration, and it is always possible that many authentic features of Jesus' ministry slipped the grasp of the earliest gleaner. The emphasis on the Galilean history is natural in a writer like Mark who based his narrative, as tradition holds, on Peter, i.e. on a Galilean source. It does not prove that Jesus may not have visited Jerusalem on more occasions than one, and left enduring impressions of His words in the mind of a young Jerusalemite disciple who saw things from another angle than the Galilean apostles. Nevertheless, some allowance ought also to be made for the influence of an idealistic motive on the part of the evangelist. It was in Jerusalem that the Lord was crucified, lifted to the

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throne from which He reigns (iii. 14; viii. 28; xii. 32), and for this reason alone it might seem desirable to lay stress on the non-Galilean ministry, and to make Jerusalem the place where the world should go for a central understanding of Jesus' work.

As regards details, Mark, by his admission of a time in Jesus' ministry when He held His Messiahship in reserve, has preserved a historical feature which the Fourth Gospel has dropped. On the other hand, the substitution, in every passage of John but one, of the term "eternal life" for the term "Kingdom of God" takes us nearer perhaps to the true meaning of Christ than the traditional expression which the Synoptists have more rigorously conserved. In placing the Cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, the evangelist has followed a way of his own, but here probably he was influenced, not by any special chronological tradition, but by a desire to obtain an appropriate headpiece for the thought which fills the first main section of his Gospel, viz., that Christ has superseded Judaism by His doctrines of the new temple (ii. 18-21), the new birth (iii. 1-21), the new worship and access to the Father (iv. 1-42). In other words his arrangement here is idealistic. More significant than these changes—because illustrating the inwardness of the Fourth Gospel—is the almost total exclusion of the apocalyptic element which

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bulks so large in the Synoptic records. Thus, in place of the Doom on Jerusalem, and the Coming on Clouds of the Son of Man, which fill Mark xiii. and corresponding Synoptic passages, we have in John the Discourses of Jesus in the Upper Room with their sublime doctrine of Christ's Eternal Coming to His Church in the Spirit. Here again the fourth evangelist takes us nearer, perhaps, to the meaning of the Master than the popular Synoptic tradition. He omits the picturesque language of apocalypse because elsewhere in the teaching of Jesus he has found its interpretation, and it is the interpretation rather than the language which is marvellous in his eyes. Realities like Judgment, the Coming of the Son of Man, the Resurrection, and the Life Eternal, are regarded no longer as purely future events but as present experiences. The vivid imagery of the Coming on Clouds is, therefore, omitted as part of that external corporeal matter of which the "spiritual" Gospel will give us the inward and absolute sense.

Thirdly, in Mark and the other Synoptics the teaching of Jesus is given in short pregnant utterances, concrete in character, and adapted in every case to concrete situations. What is even more distinctive, Jesus never in the Synoptics dwells on the mystery of His own relation to the Father except on one exalted occasion, not mentioned by Mark, when He spoke of His Father's perfect

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provision for Him, and of the absolute understanding existing between the Father and the Son (Matt. xi. 25-27, Luke x. 21-22), and even in this passage it is on the spiritual and ethical aspect of the relation that His thought rests. In John, on the other hand, the teaching of Jesus is only in a minor degree adapted to the concrete situations of ordinary life, and Jesus Himself stands usually at a further remove from men than He does in the Synoptics. He does not to the same extent go after men, seeking the lost; rather do men come to Him, or at any rate "the children of light" do, while others remain in a self-chosen darkness (iii. 21-22). It is possible that this Johannine delineation of Christ has been affected by a certain intellectualism on the part of the evangelist. He follows the theory that Christ as Light draws or repels men; His message is a challenge to their spiritual intelligence (iii. 19; viii. 31; ix. 39-41; xiv. 17; xvi. 13). For this reason the coming of men to the truth serves in this Gospel as natural substitute for the Synoptic idea of repentance towards God. It may be remarked, however, that the evangelist's tendency to represent Jesus primarily as the Light to which men come may connect historically with the aspects under which Jesus appeared in a centre like Jerusalem. There, more than in the villages of Galilee, the wise and learned, as we see by Mark himself (xii. 13f., 18f., 28f., 34), come to Him with their—not always sincere—

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questions, and Jesus is found discoursing on Messianic themes (Mark xii. 35f.). The work of Jesus in Jerusalem might well be less a seeking of the lost than a dealing with inquirers of the type of Nicodemus. Hence the Fourth Gospel may here to some extent be reflecting the original observations of a Jerusalem disciple, though not without a certain over-emphasis.

Something of the same kind may be said with regard to those long discourses, bearing on the mystery of Jesus' relation to the Father, His pre-existence, His coming down from Heaven and ascending thither again, which are so marked a feature of the Fourth Gospel. It is not necessary to suppose that Jesus always used the short popular forms of speech which we find in the Synoptic Gospels. He may on occasion have spoken formally and at length on themes connected with Messianic theology, e.g., on the question of the Messiah's relation to God (cp. Mark xii. 35f.). The discourses of the Fourth Gospel may therefore to some extent rest on the tradition of a disciple who on frequent occasions saw and heard Him in Jerusalem—the natural centre for such discussions. Such a hearer would remember notable sayings and thoughts, and he would also retain the general thread of the arguments. Nevertheless, while we ought thus to allow for the possible influence of historical tradition on the discourses in question,

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it is impossible that the explanation should end there, or that we should ascribe anything like the whole contents of the discourses to such a source. The hand of the evangelist himself is clearly apparent in the style of the discourses. This is the same, whether it is Christ, or the Baptist, or the evangelist himself who is speaking, and it reappears in the first Johannine Epistle. It would seem, therefore, that the evangelist certainly rewrote, and stamped with the subtle qualities of his own genius all the materials which came to him from historical sources. Moreover, it is little likely that he did not also, preacher-wise, expand the material in an explanatory interest. Much that is contained in the discourses can only be set down to later theological reflection on the religious and historical significance of Christ's person and teaching. We may, if we choose, express it by saying that truths imparted by the Risen Lord have been taken up into, and worked together with a tradition of His earthly teaching. Theological analysis has contributed its quatum as well as historical reminiscence. Nor should this give offence when we reflect that the writer believed in a Spirit which took *the things of Christ* and revealed them progressively to the Church (xiv. 25-26; xv. 26; xvi. 12-15). It does not lessen St. Paul's authority that something of his own Spirit-enlightened insight and experience went to his formulation of the doctrines of Christ and of grace.

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Ought it therefore to count against the Gospel according to John that part of it is undoubtedly due to the mystical reflections of the writer himself ? Not if we believe that, like Paul, he had the mind of the Spirit.

III. ORIGIN, PURPOSE, AND AIMS OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

The origin of the Fourth Gospel is enveloped in mystery, nor can it be said that recent explorations into the language and religious conceptions of the book have cleared all our difficulties away. The researches of Prof. Burney, indeed, in his recent *Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel* (1922) have shown that the Gospel is possibly an earlier work than is usually supposed, and that its distinctive theology may be explained by purely native developments of Palestinian Christianity. It is no longer necessary to derive any of its conceptions from Philo, or to acknowledge the influence of Greek thought save in so far as that thought had already naturalised itself on the soil of Palestinian Judaism. But on many points we are still left in the dark.

It is certainly probable that the Gospel was intended, in part at least, as a defence of Christianity against the hostile propaganda of the Jewish Synagogue. The Jews of the period were

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endeavouring in every way to thwart the course of Christianity by maligning the history and claims of the Founder, pointing to the obscurity of His origin, the absence from Him of the true marks of the Messiah, the impiety of His attitude to Moses, the blasphemy of His claim to Divine authority, the reproach and infamy of His death on the Cross. The evangelist has his eye on these charges, and he writes with a view to rebutting them. Again, inasmuch as these Jewish enemies of Christ were, as part of their campaign of misrepresentation, exalting John the Baptist against Jesus, one motive of the Gospel is to show the true relation of John to his great Successor.

Greater, however, than any of these motives must have been the desire to place at the disposal of the whole Church the special witness of a disciple who had stood very near to Jesus in Jerusalem, and whose testimony was felt to be, both historically and doctrinally, a necessary supplement to the tradition of the Galilean apostles.¹ This disciple had risen to eminence in a certain section of the Church, and greatly influenced a local school of thought by the intimacy and theological insight of his teaching regarding Jesus. Memoranda derived from this source form at least the basis of the Fourth Gospel. Whether in addition the evangelist owed

¹ For evidence that the fourth evangelist knew, and at times followed the Synoptists, see Moffatt, "Introduction," pp. 533-547.

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something to the influence of Paul is not certain. His theology may not be in any sense a derivative of Paulinism, but an independent and collateral development. While he and Paul touch at numerous points, as in the functions assigned to Christ in creation as well as in redemption (1 Cor. viii. 6; Col. i. 16-17; John i. 3), the recognition that in Christ the barrier between Jew and non-Jew has been removed (Col. i. 19-23; Eph. ii. 11-22; John iv. 21-24), the claim that believers in Christ are spiritually free (Gal. iv. 21-25; v. 13-18; John viii. 31-41), the place given to the Cross of Christ and to the doctrine of justification by faith, yet the *language* of Paul and the language of the Fourth Gospel are different. Paul does not use the term "Logos" or the term "Lamb of God," and the Fourth Gospel does not speak of believers being "justified" but rather of their having "eternal life." This would seem to show that the theology of Paul and the theology of the fourth evangelist had developed along independent lines.

Again, the development of Christian history has left its mark on the Fourth Gospel. The evangelist looks back at the life of Christ across the events of the intervening years, and features from the latter enter into and blend with the picture of the former. Thus it is hardly possible that the first Christian mission to Samaria is not in the writer's mind as he records the interview of Jesus with the Samaritan

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woman and His words to the disciples in iv. 38, or that he is not thinking of the later mission to the Gentiles when he reports the coming of the Greeks in xii. 20-24. The historical development of Christianity explains also his attitude to the Jews and their law, which reflects a time when the breach between the Synagogue and the Church was already a *fait accompli*.

We come next to the question of the special traditions which the Gospel incorporates. Papias informs us that as late as his time (c. A.D. 100-150) traditions regarding Jesus, both reliable and unreliable, were still circulating from lip to lip. Therefore, without raising the question who the author of the Fourth Gospel is, and what is his relation to the "witness" alluded to in passages like xix. 35, we may assume that many good traditions, which had not fallen into the net of the Synoptists, were still within reach, and capable of being used for historical purposes. Nevertheless, it is certain that many, if not all, of the special traditions made use of in the Fourth Gospel go back to the authority of a "witness" who stands in in a very close relation to the book. We have now to consider what important elements in the Gospel may with probability be traced to this special source of direct information.

In the first place, the visits of Jesus to Jerusalem, and many reminiscences of word and deed associated

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with these visits, may, as we have already seen, rest on the statements of such an authority.

To the same source may be traced again the chronology of the Gospel with respect to the Crucifixion. According to the Synoptists, or to Mark, who is the primitive authority, the Lord's Supper was instituted on the 14th day of Nisan, and the Crucifixion took place on the 15th. According to the Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, the Crucifixion took place on the 14th, the "supper" falling on the 13th (xiii. 1, xviii. 28). In other words, in Mark it is the Supper that synchronises with the slaying of the Passover Lamb, in John it is the death of Christ, the Lamb of God. The majority of scholars incline to the view that in this matter the fourth evangelist is right as against Mark, whose chronology shows a number of signs of confusion, and we may therefore assume that his account is based on first-hand knowledge—either his own or that of an authority on whom he specially leaned. It makes in favour of this view that the Asiatic churches of the first two or three centuries commemorated the Passion on Nisan 14, and that Polycrates of Ephesus, defending the usage against the Roman bishop Victor in 190, traces it back to the authority of apostolic men in Asia.

More difficult is the problem created by such special elements in the Fourth Gospel as the Raising of Lazarus. It must always constitute a great

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difficulty for serious minds that so stupendous an event, if it belonged to the Palestinian traditions regarding Jesus, should have escaped the notice of all three Synoptic writers. Even if many other well-authenticated incidents slipped the grasp of the earliest gleaners, it is not easy to see how an event of this kind could do so, if it rested on a basis of historical fact, and was generally known. For this reason it is very common to regard the Lazarus episode of the Fourth Gospel as an allegory or presentation of a spiritual truth in narrative form. The truth that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life (xi. 25) was embodied, it is held, in an allegorical narrative, the original impulse to which came from the Lazarus-parable preserved in Luke xvi. 19f., the rest being free elaboration of the motive thence derived.¹ In view of the difficulty of otherwise explaining in a satisfactory manner the absence of the episode from our other sources, this allegorical theory is entitled to a just measure of consideration at the hands even of those who approach the general question of the miraculous without any *a priori* theories of what was possible in actual fact for Jesus, who indeed would regard any such delimiting of His power as a *petitio principii*. Allegory was not so remote from the purposes of history in the time of the evangelist as it is in our day. If a great truth belonging to spiritual experience required to be

¹ Cp. Dr. Moffatt's "Introduction to the New Testament," pp. 539f.

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brought vividly before the minds of others, there would be no hesitation in popular circles to follow the natural instinct to cast it into the form of a story, utilising whatever materials tradition supplied for this purpose. Some at any rate of the Synoptic miracles may be justly explained in this way, as material precipitations of spiritual experiences or ideas. But it is one thing to concede the general admissibility of the allegorical motive as a factor in the formation or development of the evangelical tradition, it is another to think that this motive was present to the mind of the fourth evangelist when he wrote the narrative of the Raising of Lazarus. Nothing suggests that his narrative is put forward as an allegory, or as other than a record of actual fact. Hence the allegorising of the original idea, if it is to be accepted as a factor at all, must be pushed back a stage or two, and here the question rises as to the responsibility in this matter of the authority or source from whom on general evidence it appears that the evangelist derived his special material. Was this authority or witness, if he is the source of the Lazarus-narrative, consciously allegorising for didactic purposes when he told the story, or was he founding on some actual incident, though possibly elaborating it in a spiritual interest? These are not questions to which in the existing state of our knowledge we can give a final answer. But while so much may be admitted in deference to the problem

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created by the absence of the episode from our older Gospels, it may justly be felt that certain features in the narrative make strongly against the idea that it originated in allegory. The wealth of circumstantial detail with which it is related points to another source than merely spiritual ideas or motives. For this reason scholars who cannot be suspected of any bias towards traditional views feel compelled to recognise that the source or authority on whose statements the evangelist founded had some actual incident in mind, which he used as the basis of his exposition.¹

In the judgment of the present writer it is arguable that many of the special materials of the book had, previously to its composition, been utilised for homiletical or didactic purposes by the evangelist or by his source. Practical interests kept the traditions alive and moulded them. Whoever considers the marked uniformity with which the evangelist, starting from some act, word, or parable, immediately adds a discourse of Jesus in which the inward or spiritual meaning of the act or word in question is brought out, and how from this he glides imperceptibly into what looks like comments or reflections of his own, will discover a strong probability that the matter here made use of had been handled in this way before, that in fact the materials of the Fourth Gospel were to a large extent assembled and

¹ Cp. P. Gardner, "The Ephesian Gospel," pp. 283-284.

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prepared by an anterior homiletical tradition. Thus in Chap. iii. we find Jesus' words to Nicodemus about the Birth from Above followed by a passage in which Nicodemus slips out of sight, and we hear about the Love of God to the world, manifested on the Cross, and about the Salvation by Faith of all who believe. Again in Chap. v. the Healing of the Infirm Man leads up to a discourse which, starting from the word in verse 17, "My Father works till now and I work," develops the thought of the correspondence between the work of the Father and the work of the Son in such matters as Raising the Dead. Again in Chap. vi. the evangelist conjoins the Feeding of the Multitude with a discourse of Jesus to the Galileans about the Bread of Life; the text in this case is "I am the Bread of Life" (vi. 35, 48). In all these cases we have at least some degree of free amplification of the Lord's words on the part of the evangelist, but the source or tradition which he follows may have been before him in this. It may be that the bringing together of appropriate incident and discourse rested in many cases on some kind of historical reminiscence, though a historical connection between text and theme is not always insisted on by the preacher. Yet it is possible that frequent homiletical handling of the material had something to do with it.

We now come to the questions associated more particularly with the author himself. Whoever he

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was, his personality has gained an ascendancy over the material of the book to which the Synoptic Gospels offer no parallel. They are objective in their manner of narration : he has passed everything through the refracting medium of his own mind. The only New Testament parallel which can be suggested to the fourth evangelist's ascendancy over his material is the control which the mind of St. Paul exercised over the doctrinal tradition which he received from the early Church. St. Paul took over the doctrines of the Church, but gave them a new character by the spiritual understanding which he brought to bear on them. Similar was the influence exerted on the evangelical tradition by the fourth evangelist.

As regards the latter, all the evidence goes to show that like St. Paul he was a Jew by birth, though unlike St. Paul a Palestinian. This appears clearly by his careful geographical notices of Palestinian scenes, as well as by his chronological allusions and other explanatory touches. It used to be thought that his geography was weak and argued an author of non-Palestinian extraction, but this prejudice has yielded before the progress of investigation, and to-day it is customary to concede to him "a first-hand acquaintance with the topography of Palestine prior to A.D. 70" (Moffat, Introduction, p. 547). Moreover, it is increasingly recognised that subtle threads of thought and diction connect the Fourth

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Gospel with the style of the Jewish rabbinical schools, and argue a mind intimately acquainted with classical Judaism. Usually, however, it has been supposed that at a later period this student of Judaism, partly by studies in the Jewish Wisdom-literature, but more by direct contact with the Greek world, had imbued himself deeply with Greek thought and mysticism, and that a transmutation of Jewish and Christian ideas into their Greek equivalents is the key to the Fourth Gospel.

One sign of this, to which it is customary to point, is a certain tendency to intellectualise the Christian gospel, as in his conspicuous preference for the conception of "light" (i. 4, 7-9; iii. 19-21; viii. 12; ix. 39-41). This connects, it is thought, with the Greek principle that the source and power of the moral life are in knowledge.

A second sign is the prominence given in the Fourth Gospel to the idea of Regeneration (i. 12-13; iii. 3f.) as substitute for the Jewish and Synoptic idea of Repentance towards God or Conversion. The Synoptic formula "Repent, and so in the end inherit the Kingdom of Heaven" becomes in John "Be born from above, and so enter on the Eternal Life now." This change of terms is due, some allege, to the influence of the Greek Mysteries, and to the thought underlying these popular religions that nothing less than the entrance of the soul upon a new plane of life can redeem it from

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fate, world-weariness, guilt and death. What is borrowed, of course, is only the *term*. The Greek "regeneration" had no ethical connotation, and is therefore external to the Christian experience described by the term. Nevertheless the adoption of the term, it is argued, enabled the Church to make itself intelligible to the Greek world, while exalting the "new creation" which resulted from surrender to Christ as Lord.

A third sign is the mystical sense which the Fourth Gospel attaches to the term Life, meaning the "eternal life" which Christ gives to men. In the Synoptic teaching and in early Christianity eternal life means not a state of spiritual life here but life in the Kingdom or Age to come. In the Fourth Gospel, on the other hand, it is identified with the (present) life which Christians possess in and through the Redeemer, and it is often thought that this change, and indeed the whole extrusion of apocalyptic eschatology from the Fourth Gospel, is due to the migration of thought from the Jewish world, where all contrasts are summed up in the temporal distinction of two *ages*, a present and a future, to the Greek world, where the great distinction is between the two *spheres*, the material and the spiritual.

But of course the chief instance of this supposed influence of Greek thought on the evangelist's mind is his adoption of the title Logos as denominator

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of the mediatorship which Christ exercises in creation, revelation and redemption. The term Logos, it is held, is of Greek philosophical extraction. The Stoics had given the name to the all-pervading Reason which regulates and holds together the universe, and Philo, the Hellenising Jewish theologian of Alexandria, had taken up the conception, and combined it with the Jewish-Biblical idea of the Divine Wisdom. Whether the evangelist had read Philo is indeed considered to be doubtful. The Logos-idea was native to the Greek philosophical schools since the time of the early Ionian philosopher Heracleitus, and therefore no thinker needed to come at it *via* Alexandria. But as, on the other hand, Philo describes the Logos by such titles as "the Manna of God" and "the Shepherd," titles which are applied to Christ in the Fourth Gospel, and as not a few phrases and turns of thought in the latter echo Philonic language (Moffatt, pp. 523-525), it is not considered certain that Philo's influence can be excluded. Those who assume that Philo did influence the fourth evangelist admit, indeed, that the influence was external and formal. The Greek Logos is an abstract conception; the content of the evangelist's doctrine is the living Christ.

But now this whole theory, according to which the distinctive qualities of the Fourth Gospel are due to the influence of Greek thought, collapses like a house of cards if it can be shown, upon

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examination of the language, that the work was originally composed, or at least thought out, in *Aramaic*. Such, however, in the conclusion to which Prof. Burney comes in the work already mentioned. He has shown first, that the language of *John* is—to an extent not rivalled even by *Mark*—“cast throughout in the *Aramaic* mould”; secondly, that the distinctive theological idea of the book, the *Logos*-doctrine of the prologue, is “the development of conceptions enshrined in the *Targums*, and is not derived from *Philo*.” The evangelist has in verses 1-2 of the prologue simply united Christ with the Palestinian-Jewish conception of the *Memra* of God, and for the rest followed out a mode of thought which finds abundant illustration in the *Targums*. Thus *Gen. iii. 8* appears in the *Targum* “They heard the voice of the *Memra* of the Lord God walking in the garden”; *Gen. vi. 6* appears as “The Lord repented in His *Memra* because He had made man”; *Gen. ix. 12* appears as “This is the token of the covenant which I am making between My *Memra* and you.” This Jewish habit of mentally supplying the intermediate action of the “*Memra*” in all God’s dealings with man seems to Dr. Burney the sufficient explanation of *John*’s identification of the Christian Lord and Son of God with the “*Logos*.” Therefore he considers it beyond question that the Gospel is “a product of Palestinian thought,” and

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that "the figment of Alexandrine influence upon the author must be held finally to be disproved" (Burney, *Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 35ff., 126ff.).

From these premises, which seem established beyond the shadow of a doubt, Dr. Burney proceeds to certain inferences, which have not, perhaps, the same cogency.

The first is that the natural home of a writing composed or thought out in *Aramaic* will be Palestine or Syria rather than Ephesus or Asia, and as the Gospel contains too many explanations of things Palestinian to admit of the supposition that it was written for Palestinians, Dr. Burney would fix on Syria, and indeed on Antioch as its birthplace. This does not necessarily follow from the Aramaic character of the writing, for Aramaic habits of thought might survive the author's migration from his native home to Ephesus. But Dr. Burney finds external evidence of the Antiochian origin of the Gospel, particularly in the fact that the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch (A.D. 110) seem to echo the language of the Gospel, and the same holds of the Odes of Solomon which Dr. Rendel Harris and other scholars assign to Antioch.

If this theory of the Antiochian origin of the Gospel is accepted, some other explanation than the theory of Greek environment must be found for the ideas and conceptions referred to on pages 37-38.

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The second conclusion drawn by Dr. Burney is that the Gospel may be dated considerably earlier than the period usually assigned (A.D. 90-110). He does not think that it reflects the standpoint of extreme old age, and therefore he would date it not later than 75-80. This would give time for its influence on the circles from which came the Odes of Solomon, assuming that the latter work belongs to the first century; and also it would not exclude the possibility that the evangelist was influenced by the writings of St. Paul.

As to the author himself, "While the conclusion that he wrote his Gospel in Aramaic strongly confirms the opinion that he was an actual eye-witness of the events which he describes, it must be admitted that the clear traces which we have noticed of his acquaintance with Rabbinic learning seem to diminish the probability that he was St. John the Apostle" (*op. cit.* p. 133). Dr. Burney, therefore, falls back on another John, viz., John the Presbyter, and he thinks that the attribution of the Gospel to the latter is borne out by the early Asiatic tradition regarding John of Ephesus, and by the internal evidence of the Gospel itself, which points to "a Jerusalemite of priestly family" as its source. He thinks that this John, having written the Gospel at Antioch, passed the latter days of his life at Ephesus, with which the tradition of the Church connects him.

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Up to this point there has been no discussion of the question who the writer of the Fourth Gospel, or his special source, is, though it has been noticed that much of the material of the Gospel points to a Jerusalem-witness of Jesus' life as the original authority. We have now to take up this question by itself.

IV. AUTHORSHIP OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Whatever line of approach we take to this ultimate question, whether the line of the ancient traditions respecting the John of Ephesus, to whom since the second century the Fourth Gospel has been ascribed, or the line of the internal evidence which the Gospel itself furnishes, we find ourselves confronted by an astonishing combination of clearness and ambiguity in the data which renders the Johannine problem the most perplexing in the whole field of New Testament literature. The uncertain issues may be presented thus :—

I. It is not clear whether the John of Ephesus, of whom second century tradition speaks, is John the Son of Zebedee, or another John who also had been a "disciple" of the Lord.

II. It is not certain whether the Fourth Gospel claims to have been written by the Beloved Disciple

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who appears in its pages, or only to be founded on his testimony.

Thus, accepting the identification of John of Ephesus with the Beloved Disciple, we are confronted with four possible issues.

I. Let us glance briefly at the second century evidence regarding John of Ephesus.

Justin Martyr, who had resided and laboured at Ephesus for a period before going to Rome (A.D. 135), ascribes the Apocalypse to "a man among us, named John, one of the apostles of the Christ" (Dial. 81). If by the "apostles" Justin meant the limited circle of the Twelve, his statement would be a proof that the John in question was in the second century believed to be the son of Zebedee. But the breadth with which the term "apostles" was used in those early times makes an exact inference from Justin's statement impossible.

Irenæus, who had spent his early years in Asia, and who had received part of his information from Polycarp, refers in a series of passages to the former residence in Asia of a John whom he regularly styles "the disciple of the Lord." In one passage he refers to elders who in Asia had conversed with "John the disciple of the Lord," and who had received from him certain statements regarding the Lord's age when He died (Adv. Haer. II. 22. 5). In several others he refers to statements made by Polycarp regarding John's activities, his quarrel with

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the heretic Cerinthus, and his survival down to the times of Trajan (III. 3, 4 ; II. 22, 5). The most interesting reference is in his letter to Florinus in which Irenæus recalls how, while still a boy in Lower Asia, he with Florinus saw and heard the blessed Polycarp discourse to the multitude of his intercourse with "John and the rest of those who had seen the Lord" (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* V. 20). In another passage he states that "John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon His breast, published a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia" (III. 1, 1), and finally he states that the Gospel in question began "In the beginning was the Word, etc." (III. 2, 1). Thus Irenæus knows of a John, a "disciple of the Lord," who had leaned upon His breast, who later resided and laboured at Ephesus, and who there published the work which we know as the Fourth Gospel. Polycrates states that "John who lay on the Lord's breast . . . fell asleep at Ephesus," but he adds that he "had been a priest, who had worn the petalon" (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* III. 31, V. 24). The only second-century writing which definitely identifies this John of Ephesus with the son of Zebedee is the work known as the Acts of John, which is of doubtful origin and authority.

To these testimonies we may add the celebrated passage of Papias, in which, speaking of the apostolic sources of his knowledge of the Lord's sayings,

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he distinguishes two Johns, one the Apostle, the other a John whom he styles "the Presbyter." The passage is as follows :

"And again when a person came who had been a follower of the presbyters, I would enquire about the sayings of the presbyters—as to what Andrew or Peter said, or Philip or Thomas or James, or *John* or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples, and as to what Aristion and the *Presbyter John*, the Lord's disciples, say." (Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* III. 39.)

Papias also stated, according to some late literary evidence dating from the seventh to the ninth centuries, that John the son of Zebedee, like his brother James "was put to death by Jews." (See Moffatt, *Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 603-606.)

What inference may now be drawn from the above array of evidence? Clearly everything turns on the interpretation which we put upon the testimony of Irenæus which, recapitulating that of Polycarp (A.D. 69-154), exceeds in bulk and in quality that of any other witness. It is usually assumed that Irenæus identified the John of whom he speaks with John the Apostle, the son of Zebedee. This is taken for granted even by those who think that Irenæus erred in so understanding the statements of Polycarp and other informants. The fact

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that Irenæus never in so many words alludes to John as "John the Apostle," but always says "John the disciple of the Lord," is taken by such as unconscious evidence that the John of whom Polycarp and the Elders spoke was not the Apostle but a different person, who may conceivably be found in the second John mentioned by Papias, viz. John the Presbyter. Recently, however, Dr. Burney has seriously questioned whether Irenæus ever made the supposed mistake of identifying the John of his informants with the Apostle. He sees no reason for thinking that Irenæus meant any other person than Polycarp and other good authorities of the second century meant. The "disciple of the Lord," who leaned on Jesus' breast, and who afterwards came to Ephesus and wrote the Gospel, was to Irenæus equally with the others John the Presbyter, not John the Apostle. Even if he sometimes classifies him generally with the "apostles," this is only in the same wide sense in which he ranks evangelists like Mark and Luke with the apostles. "We conclude," he says "that by 'John the disciple of the Lord' Irenæus means John the Presbyter," and he considers that this agrees with all the evidence of the second century, except the doubtful statement in the Acts of John (Burney, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-140).

This view of which Dr. Burney is the latest exponent has found extraordinary favour in recent

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years. In support of John the Presbyter rather than John the Apostle as the original John of Ephesus may be cited :

(1) The improbability of so mystical and theological a treatise as the Fourth Gospel, one also which bears so many traces of Rabbinic learning, coming from the hand of the son of Zebedee.

(2) The difficulty of uniting the son of Zebedee with such features of the Beloved Disciple in the Fourth Gospel as his acquaintance with the high priest (xviii. 15, 16), his special knowledge of eminent Jerusalemites like Nicodemus (iii. 1f. ; vii. 50), his possession of a house in or near Jerusalem (xix. 27).

(3) The alleged statement of Papias that John, the son of Zebedee, was put to death, presumably at an early time, by Jews.

(4) The comparative unimportance of the place assigned to John the Apostle in the above list of Papias' authorities for the evangelical tradition. If so interesting a person as the son of Zebedee had come to Ephesus and achieved distinction there, would Papias have mentioned him "only sixth in a list of seven" of the apostles ?

(5) The fact that two items in the Johannine literature, viz. II and III John, appear under the name of "the Presbyter."

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When these arguments are taken together, they create a very strong case for the John the Presbyter theory. Especially strong is the second, since it involves no elements which we are not able to check. The Beloved Disciple who figures in the Fourth Gospel has the right of entry to priestly circles (xviii. 15-16), and the natural inference from this is that he was a man of high rank or priestly family. These are not features which connect themselves readily with John the son of Zebedee, as known to us in the Synoptic tradition, but they suit admirably with the John of Ephesus of whom Polycrates says that he "was a priest, who had worn the petalon." Those therefore who take this view assume that a young Jerusalemite disciple, named John, who was not of the Galilean circle of the Twelve, had stood specially near to Jesus at certain periods of His earthly life, and, notwithstanding the silence of the Synoptists, was present—perhaps as host—at the Supper on the eve of Jesus' death, when he occupied a place next to the Saviour. This disciple and witness of Jesus came in later life to Ephesus, and there under the familiar name of "the disciple of the Lord" or "the Presbyter" rose to high eminence in the Church, profoundly influenced a school of thought, wrote a number of treatises, and dying at a great age left a name which later absorbed the lustre of the other John, the Apostle who perished earlier. Dr. Burney would assign to this John all the five

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Johannine writings, the Gospel being written before his coming to Ephesus. Dr. Moffatt and others assign to him the Apocalypse and the Second and Third Epistles, but consider that the Gospel and First Epistle were not written by him, but produced under his influence.

Perhaps this theory comes nearest to a probable solution of the Johannine problem. It secures us a direct witness of Jesus' life as the source of the Fourth Gospel. It has the special merit of explaining naturally why "scenes and discourses at or near Jerusalem" form the warp of the Fourth Gospel, while the Galilean history has little prominence. And by allowing for an essential difference in training and mental outlook as between the Galilean apostles and the Jerusalem witness, it goes far to explain the difference in tone between the Synoptic and Johannine representations. Yet the theory has its difficulties.

(1) There is the strange fact that the Fourth Gospel never mentions John the son of Zebedee by name, thereby leaving it an open question whether the Beloved Disciple is not to be identified with him.

(2) The first indication of the presence of an unnamed disciple in the Gospel occurs in connection with the *Galilean* followers of Jesus (i. 37, 40), and in a context which, if Mark i. 16-20 can be used as a

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key, seems to leave no doubt that one of the Zebedean brothers is intended.

(3) It is certainly a difficulty that, if John the son of Zebedee was martyred at an early time, the fact so wholly faded from the memory of the Church that in the third and later centuries, if not in the second, scholars like Eusebius identified him with the John of Ephesus, especially as Eusebius had read Papias, the alleged source of the statement that John was put to death by Jews, and well knew the existence of the other John, the Presbyter.

None perhaps of these difficulties is insuperable. First, the omission of the name of John the son of Zebedee from the Gospel no more necessitates the identification of the Beloved Disciple with him than it necessitates his identification with Matthew or Bartholomew or other members of the Twelve who are passed over in the Fourth Gospel. The evangelist may have had no particular motive for the non-mention of John or his brother. It may simply be that the Zebedean pair did not occupy any very important place in his mind. Secondly, it may be asked whether Mark i. 16-20 gives us any title to suppose that the unnamed disciple of John i. 40 is either James or John. The Markan and Johannine passages need not cover the same ground, but unless they do so there exists no necessity at all to see a Zebedean in the unnamed disciple of the

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Johannine passage. Finally, Eusebius' ascription of the Ephesian residence and the authorship of the Fourth Gospel to the son of Zebedee may be due simply to the influence of the tradition dating from the third century. He may have known what Papias said regarding John the Apostle, but not considered that his alleged martyrdom excluded the tradition that he had laboured at Ephesus. None of the above considerations should be held equal in weight with the fact that the Fourth Gospel by its own internal evidence points to a Jerusalemite rather than a Galilean as the original of the Beloved Disciple.

Nevertheless, inasmuch as unknown factors may have determined the history of the son of Zebedee in directions other than we should gather from the Synoptic Gospels alone, it cannot be held that the John the Presbyter hypothesis has been absolutely proved.

II. Did the Beloved Disciple actually write the Gospel, or is he to be thought of as only its inspiring source ?

Opinion is divided on this question, because the interpretation of the evidence of the Gospel itself on this point is not quite certain. On the mere merits of the case there is no improbability in supposing that a man of the special training and outlook of John the Presbyter wrote the Gospel, though the likelihood is distinctly diminished if

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we should have to ascribe to him so wholly different a work as the Apocalypse. With the ascription to him of the latter work the scale is turned in favour of indirect rather than direct authorship of the Gospel.

When, however, we turn to the Gospel, we find that its evidence is quite compatible with the theory of indirect authorship on the part of the Disciple to whom it particularly refers. Passages like i. 14 "We saw His glory" do not prove very much one way or another, because while these words might be used by an eyewitness of Jesus' life, they might also be used by one who was only identifying himself with the Church's witness to the Incarnate Glory. In the passages in which the Beloved Disciple is directly referred to, the language is never such as absolutely implies his identity with the writer, and particularly is this true with regard to xix. 35, "He who has seen has borne witness, . . . and he (*ἐκεῖνος*) knows that he is telling the truth." While on grammatical grounds the reference of the pronoun *ἐκεῖνος* to the writer's self might pass, the natural use of language is against it; it suggests an appeal to a third person. For this reason the note in xxi. 24, that the Beloved Disciple "wrote these things," may be taken with some latitude: the words might be used of one whose function was confined to furnishing the substance of the book. If, therefore we conclude that the evidence of the Gospel itself

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does not compel the assumption that the Beloved Disciple wrote the work, but only that he stands behind it as authority or source, we have a theory which, other things being equal, might suit with either of the above identifications of the Disciple, but which, in the existing state of the whole evidence, agrees best with the view that he is the Presbyter. We shall regard the Gospel then as incorporating the essential testimony of the Disciple, and as thus resting ultimately on the authority of an eye-witness. To the evangelist who has reported him we shall assign the Aramaic thought and learning which Dr. Burney discovers in the work, and also that free reflective interpretation of the material to which the general character of the Gospel points. The view that the Gospel has come to us only indirectly from the hands of John has some degree of external support. The Muratorian Canon hints at co-operation on the part of John's "fellow-disciples." Such a division of John's authority is not likely to have been asserted at the close of the second century unless some tradition to that effect existed somewhere in the Church.

CHAPTER II

The Incarnation and Historical Manifestation of the Logos

(i. I—ii. II)

JEW AND GREEK IN RELIGIOUS HISTORY

WHEN a Greek thought of the Supreme Being as entering into intelligible relations with the world, it was primarily through the medium of Ideas or Reason. But when a Jew thought of God drawing near to him, it was primarily in the form of Personality or Action. This difference, strong and deep, divides the entire histories of the two peoples. The leaders of the one race are philosophers and idealists; those of the other are prophets and reformers. Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek for wisdom. It accords with this that among the Jews religion never becomes a speculative thing, but remains rooted and grounded in history, in the record of God's dealings with men through men like David or Moses or the prophets, and that when they think of God's future action in bringing in His Kingdom, the expectation centres round the appearance of an elect personality—a greater than

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Moses or David—who shall be the sign of God's presence, and the instrument of His purpose.

But in the later period of Judaism, when the Greek mind and the Jewish mind were gravitating together, there occurred a certain approximation of the two systems of thought. It is illustrated on the one side by the Jewish recognition within the Godhead of a principle of Divine Wisdom, through which all that is known of God in creation, revelation, and redemption, has been mediated: this Wisdom-conception was chiefly developed in the Hellenistic literature of the Diaspora, but has a Palestinian counterpart in the conception of the Divine "Word" or *Memra*. It is illustrated on the other side in those later forms of Stoicism, e.g., that of Poseidonius, in which under the influence, if not of Jewish, at least of Oriental religious conceptions, the Greek idea of the Reason which pervades the universe acquires a semi-personal aspect. Here we have from both extremes a distinct movement towards positions more easily intelligible to the other side. Yet, characteristically enough, the Jewish conception of the Wisdom or Word of God never abandons its ground in history. The Wisdom of God is a principle which, seeking men, though unable to be searched out by them, "in every generation passing into holy souls, maketh men to be friends of God and prophets" (Wisdom vii. 27), i.e., it expresses itself in personality. This was the

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principle which the Christian Church grasped under impressions of the holy life and history of Jesus. To the pure Greek, on the other hand, such a conception was utterly foreign, because he had no equal background of religious history.

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF THE LOGOS

When the Gospel according to John in its opening section puts forward the principle that in Jesus Christ the Logos became incarnate, it signifies in a formal viewpoint the final uniting of the Jewish and Greek ideas of God's approach to man. This holds good whether the evangelist came at his conception under the influence of Greek ideas, or along a line of thought entirely native to Palestinian Christianity. In the latter case the term "Logos" simply translates into Greek the Jewish-Aramaic conception of the Divine "Memra," with which the Church has already identified the person of its Lord and Saviour. But let it be noted that this does not in any way signify an abandonment of the historical position for a ground in Greek or in any philosophy. On the contrary, it signifies the calling of the Greek world to come and worship at the feet of Christ. All those claims which the Greeks have made for philosophy are here transferred to the Christ in whom the true Word or Wisdom of God has been revealed in flesh. The

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term Logos was familiar to the Greeks. Six centuries before, the Ionian philosopher Heracleitus of Ephesus in semi-poetical language complained that the mass of men has no understanding for the eternal "Word" of Reason, and later the Stoics had revived this conception of a rational Logos which gives meaning and unity to the world. By the very use of this term, therefore, as a translation of *Memra*, the evangelist establishes a point of contact with the philosophy of the day, though without any idea of transposing the Gospel into the philosophical key. His interests, and those of the Church, are not in metaphysics but in redemption. He means presently to show us the Logos-Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (i. 29, 36). He writes that men may believe that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and thus have life "in His name" (xx. 31). In the light of all this the appropriation to Christ of the title of the Logos is not a merging of Christ in philosophy, but a merging of philosophy in Christ.

The Christian appropriation of the term Logos or *Memra* was all the easier and more inevitable because in its literal sense of "Word" it fell naturally into line with the Old Testament conception that God has spoken to mankind in Scripture, and with the Christian conception that Scripture has been fulfilled in Christ (Heb. i. 1). Moreover, virtually the same doctrine of Christ is present in

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Paul who to Jews asking signs and to Greeks seeking wisdom holds up Christ on the Cross as at once *God's power and God's wisdom* (1 Cor. i. 22-24, 30-31). Are the Greeks interested in Creation? in the Approach of the Infinite to the Finite? in Truth? in Justice? in Redemption from the World? in the Ideal Life? in the City of God? in the Unseen World? They will find in Christ God's answer to all questions. To this Christology of St. Paul the fourth evangelist adds nothing but the name Logos.

Moreover, though the adoption of this name was later destined to carry Christian theology into somewhat arid realms of speculation, the evangelist who first makes use of it is not to be held responsible. He has no intention to speculate, nor is Christianity to him any set of truths accessible to the natural reason. Indeed the whole point of the Fourth Gospel is the opposite. God has been revealed finally only in a Personality: "No man has seen God at any time; a Divine One, an Only Son, who is on the Father's breast, has interpreted Him" (i. 18).

THE LOGOS IN CREATION AND REVELATION

The Christian thought of the Mediatorship of Christ started from His Cross and Resurrection by which He ascended to God as Intercessor for His people with the Father. In other words, it has its base in spiritual experience, but from this base it

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has already in St. Paul broadened out to take in a whole range of God's approach to the world. To St. Paul God has been mediated in creation and revelation as well as in redemption, and therefore Christ's mediatorship holds in every sphere. "To us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and by whom we exist" (1 Cor. viii. 6; Cp. Col. i. 15-17).

The same stage of thought is represented by the opening section of the Fourth Gospel with its recognition of an eternal Divine "Word," who existing eternally with and in God has been His agent in creation and in revelation. When the evangelist says that all things came into being through this Logos, and "apart from Him did not one thing that exists come to be," he is writing the Christian counterpart and supplement to the creation-narrative of Gen. i., and at the same time ruling out all Gnostic or quasi-philosophical theories which assume a plurality of mediators, or indeed any one but Christ. From creation the evangelist passes to the function of the Logos in revelation. His activity in the past is identical with the history of Divine revelation in Israel, and with the imparting of the knowledge of God everywhere, for "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." Revelation has been personal and vital, the Logos manifesting himself in the mind of man. Not that

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its course has been unimpeded : " The light shines in the dark," there has been negation as well as affirmation of God in the world, but " the dark has not mastered it " (i. 1-5).

Here certain questions arise which are inseparable from the idea of Divine revelation. In the first place, the evangelist recognises the negative element, the mystery or darkness of the world. He does not inquire into the origin of this element, but simply assumes it, as all religion must. It contents him that the light which has been given through the Logos in nature and in the mind of man marks a supreme and decisive advance upon the original darkness, and that it goes on shining in spite of the world's sin and ignorance. The background of life has always been in a sense darkness, but it has never been an unrelieved darkness. All that we have learned of wisdom, order and law in the world of nature, and all that we have learned of grace, purity, justice, and truth in the world of the Spirit have marked an advance, have been the seeing of the " shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." When once God, the sense of law and sin, the experience of forgiveness, the power of prayer, have come to consciousness, there is no going back on that experience. But darkness, by which the evangelist means moral darkness, the fact of sin, remains. It is a reality, just as the shining of Divine Wisdom is a reality,

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and therefore, as the evangelist will show us, *if we omit the fact of sin in our theology, our thought of God short-circuits* ; it does not traverse the whole cycle of the facts of life, or go with Jesus the whole way to Calvary.

In the second place, the evangelist affirms the unity of the revelation in nature and in the soul of man. This is an essentially Biblical thought, which finds expression in the Psalms for instance, when the mind passes from the glory of God in the heavens to the converting and enlightening power of His law (Psalm xix.), or when with His counting of the stars it combines His healing of the broken-hearted (Psalm cxlvii. 3-4). It is true that the effort to hold the two things together in the grasp of faith has sometimes proved too hard for humanity. The impassivity and neutrality of nature, the inexorableness of her laws, burden the hearts of men to-day even more than they did in the first Christian century. Yet neither the scepticism of the scientist unable to find the aspects of a personal God in nature, nor the positivism of the historical theorist who, despairing of omnipotent and all-wise guidance as a factor in human affairs, falls back on the doctrine of a limited God, can prove a refuge to the human spirit. Man must rest in God, must believe that all things at last are reconciled in Him. In other words, admitting the mystery in nature and in providence, bending his head before it as

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Elijah did on Horeb, he must yet with Athanasius and the Scripture believe that the God of nature and the God of redemption are finally one. This unity the evangelist affirms, and its affirmation is appropriate in the prologue to the life of Jesus, in whom the sense of God's redeeming grace was combined with such a sense of the goodness of the created order, such a sense of God's care for the sparrow on the wing, as has no parallel in human history.

THE LOGOS INCARNATE IN JESUS CHRIST

All this, however, is prefatory. The theme of the prologue and of the Gospel is that in Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, the Logos which had been the Light of men in the past became incarnate, and made His dwelling with men. What does this dogmatic statement, which forms the central thought of the religion of Paul as well as of John, imply in the way of religious experience? Here we can only notice one or two leading principles. First, when the evangelist speaks of the Divine Wisdom in the past, he is naturally thinking specially of Israel's peculiar experience. Israel had in its history been uniquely conscious of guidance under the moulding and controlling influence of the character of God. It could offer no other explanation of its singular fortunes than that Jehovah

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had made himself specially known to it, and taken its affairs into His own hands. "The Lord God hath showed us His glory and His greatness. . . . Who is there of all flesh that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire as we have?" (Deut. v. 24-26). From the Christian standpoint this influence of the Divine character on Israel in the past is not only a fact, but the only fact which supplies any analogy to the new creative influence which has been brought to bear on human life by Jesus.¹ All those past religious forces which came to consciousness in and through Israel have for the Christian mind come to a focal point in Jesus, and are now diffused as rays from Him. To take an illustration: until Jesus came the Scriptures of the Old Testament had summed up the whole will and counsel of God, and served as the only supreme authority. But Jesus of Nazareth had for the Christian mind superseded these Scriptures, and that in virtue of a direct evidence of God which had been seen in Him, and which for His followers had become absolute, the supreme certainty of life (cp. John vi. 68-69).

Secondly, this new experience of God, which forms the starting-point of Christian theology, was embodied in a *life*. It was a revelation in Man that brought God anew into the world's life. "The Logos became flesh, and made his dwelling among

¹ Sir G. A. Smith, *Jerusalem*, Vol. II, pp. 553-555.

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us." The new theology of Christianity starts from the fact of such a life as that of Jesus emerging on the human plane. Here was a phenomenon which diverted the eyes of His followers from every other source of Divine knowledge and drew them to itself as to a deeper source of insight than they had ever in their lives experienced. A new sense of God's presence, of the supremacy of His will, of the reality of His love, of the character of His mind, came to them in and through Jesus. Not His words or anything that He did, but Himself created the new sense of the Divine, and became for ever associated with it. His Person mediated the new theology, and from Him it could never more be separated. The evangelist further indicates in a few words the nature of the personal change which came over those who received Him. It was nothing less than a new birth by which they became conscious of being sons of God (i. 12-13). Christ as the Light of men opened the eyes of His followers to the unseen, to a world of spiritual values hitherto undiscerned, and made them feel that by the side of these new values and motives which were thus disclosed all other things were unsubstantial shadows. The life of the Messiah was thus "not a denial of reason, but a definition of it." To those to whom the spiritual meaning of life has been disclosed in Christ, nothing else merits the name of Reason. The axis of existence is altered. Their life begins

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from a new start or birth. As the evangelist expresses it, "Those who received Him"—the first followers of Christ were a handful, they could even be counted (*ὅσοι*),¹ nevertheless—"to them He gave the power (or right) to become children of God." The word translated "power" combines the ideas of *moral enablement* and *legitimated position*. In the first place, Christ enabled His followers morally to achieve a new status of spiritual life. He released within them energies by whose very action they rose consciously to a new plane of existence. In the second place, this new life associated itself in experience with the sense of reconciliation to God, of adjustment to His will, of having become the objects of His love. The Spirit in their hearts bore constant witness to their beloved status, enabling them to say "Abba, Father" with an intensity of realisation never before experienced. Measuring their life by past standards, they felt that a new personality had arisen within them which in its relations with God satisfied them, and gave them an inalienable joy.

In the above section we have one of those epitomes in which the whole history of a movement is presented. Divine sonship as a theoretical conception was formally present in Israel's relation to Jehovah. But the real thing, combining God's favour with His likeness, and uniting renewal of

¹ H. J. Holtzmann.

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moral power to the peace of a satisfied heart, was a Christian discovery made through the Incarnation. Everywhere in the New Testament we seem to be catching glimpses of the same fact. Jesus at His Baptism hears His Divine calling announced in the heavenly Voice, "Thou art my Son, the Beloved. on whom I have set My favour," and to this call the life of Jesus was the answer. The world did not know what "Son of God" meant until Jesus came, and lived His life, and died His death, saying with His last breath "It is finished." The Jews had given the title to the expected Messiah with but scant appreciation of its spiritual meaning. The world with greater blindness had bestowed the appellation of "*divi filius*" on the autocrat in the palace at Rome. Even to the Master Himself the full meaning of the call to be the Son of God was not disclosed except as step by step He went on in obedience, realising in life and in death the consciousness of being ever at one with the Father (Matt. xi. 27 ; Luke x. 22). But because He achieved the end, and revealed the glory of His calling, Sonship to God becomes the central conception of the new religion, the thing in which supremely the Spirit of God in Christianity manifests itself. "God," says St. Paul, "has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba Father" (Gal. iv. 6 ; Rom. viii. 14-17. Cp. Heb. ii. 10 ; 1 John iii. 1).

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On one or two other points we may still linger for a moment. Defining the "glory" of the Incarnate Word, which he says was incomparable—"as of *an Only Son* from a Father,"—the evangelist resolves it into the components "grace and reality." It is tempting to construe these words as a statement that in Christ the divine was united to so practical a sense and use of life that henceforth the two things, the truly heavenly and the truly human, could never more be severed in thought. But while this is true in point of fact, the evangelist means rather that in Christ God's favour and His likeness were perfectly represented. The love of the Father and the possession of the Father's likeness are the things which mark the Son. The same thought recurs presently in words which, whether they continue the testimony of the Baptist which begins at i. 15, or, as is more likely, are a comment of the evangelist, express what Christ has through His life become to His Church, viz., the source of every grace (i. 16-17): "Out of His fulness we have all received grace after grace." That is to say, every new step forward which the moral consciousness of mankind has made in the Christian Church, every spiritual gain which has characterised the course of Christianity in the world, nay, every Christian quality,

"Every virtue we possess,
And every victory won,
And every thought of holiness"

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have been the direct result of the manifestation of God in Christ, have marked successive stages in the appropriation of what has come to the Church in Jesus—another admission that what had come to Israel from the influence of God's character was now mediated to the Christian world through Jesus. Hitherto mankind had known God only through the Mosaic Law: now in Christ it had been let into the mystic secret of His redeeming love and of His perfect likeness (i. 17-18).

The Logos in other words had to be revealed in humanity before men could see God aright.

THE WITNESS OF JOHN

If the glory of Jesus as the Divine Logos dates from eternity, His historical manifestation under the familiar names which meet us in the Gospels dates from the days of John the Baptist, who under God was the means of introducing Jesus to the Jewish nation. So close was the relation of John to Jesus that none of our evangelists has been able to tell the story of the latter without a preliminary reference to the great preacher of the wilderness. But in the Fourth Gospel a greater emphasis is laid on John's witness to Jesus than in any of the others. John's historical language about the Mightier than he, who should baptise with the Spirit, is

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interpreted as meaning that John not only recognised Jesus in His messianic character, but saw in Him the only Son of the Father and the Lamb of God who takes away the world's sins. It was only natural that the deepest notes should be read into the Baptist's historical expressions, since not only had Jesus received His divine call while undergoing baptism at John's hands, and not only had the mission of Jesus sprung from the calix of the movement inaugurated by the Baptist, but Jesus had declared John to be the expected Elias, He had named his work the great divine sign of the times, and He had exalted him above all past and contemporary figures. In the light of the significance thus assigned to him, the testimony of John to Jesus could not be too positively stated.

But it would appear that the fourth evangelist had a special reason for claiming that the Baptist's testimony to Jesus was the corroboration *a priori* of the Church's faith in Christ. The Baptist's name was in some circles a signal for hesitation on the part of many who would otherwise have yielded immediate allegiance to Jesus as Revealer of God and Saviour. There is always a temptation in a new religious era to remain at an arrested stage of spiritual life, and it would appear as if this temptation was created for not a few in the apostolic age by the allegation of Jewish anti-Christian propagandists

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that John's mission was *prior* in time to that of Jesus, which in Jewish eyes was equivalent to saying that his authority was superior. We read that Paul coming to Ephesus about the year 55 found there certain "disciples" who had not received the Holy Spirit when they "believed," but knew only of "the baptism of John" (Acts xix. 1-7). Who were these disciples? The question is complicated because they seem in some sense both to have acknowledged Jesus, and to have remained at the Johannine or infra-Christian stage of spiritual life. Either therefore they were a group of Jews, baptised followers of John, who had in some sense "believed" on Jesus on the strength of some testimony of their master, without however feeling obliged to cast in their lot with Him: or they were a sect of Christians who for some reason had remained apart from the life of the greater Church, and so cut themselves off from those larger developments of faith and life which had come to the Church through the communal possession of the Holy Spirit. The latter view is probably correct, but, whichever be accepted, the presence in Ephesus of Jews who for polemical or sectarian purposes set John in the scale against Jesus is a sufficient explanation of the irresolution of these "disciples," and of the energy with which St. Paul proceeded to set them right. And it may be that the existence of the same anti-Christian propaganda at a later time, whether in Ephesus

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or elsewhere, prompted the fourth evangelist to such a vigorous defence of John's real statements as he has undertaken.

Whoever at any rate pauses to consider why the evangelist should introduce on the part of the Baptist so explicit a repudiation of personal claims to religious reverence as is made in the present passage (i. 19-28 ; Cp. i. 8), will regard it as practically certain that in some quarters the Baptist had been invested, if not with Messianic honours (Cp. Luke iii. 15), at least with a religious importance which inverted his true relation to Christ. This explains why his testimony is so often appealed to, and why he is represented as disowning before a commission of Jews from Jerusalem that he is either the Christ, or the expected Elias of Mal. iii. 1, or the "Prophet" of Deut. xviii. 15, or indeed anything but the "Voice" of which Isaiah speaks (i. 19-34).

JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD

But the Voice of John speaks very definitely. In what appears to be a soliloquy at the moment when he sees Jesus coming to him for baptism, John says, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the world's sin." We need not linger over the question to what extent the literal terms of the

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announcement here made can be credited historically to the Baptist. It is as "Lamb of God" that the evangelist sees Jesus entering on the human stage, and if the words are assigned to John it is because better than any others they sum up the true import of the Baptist's predictions. At the same time, it is by no means impossible that the Baptist should have spoken of the Coming One in language derived from the sacrificial typology of the Old Testament.

Readers of *Ecce Homo* will remember that the author applies to the interpretation of John's language the perfect delineation of a lamb of God in the Twenty-third Psalm. He says that John himself was no lamb of God in that sense, but a "wrestler with life," one to whom peace only came by conflict, and whose eyes were ever straining towards another type of character which by a larger share in heaven's calm and purity should work a greater deliverance on the earth than he had been able to do. This explanation overlooks the fact that, when the evangelist quotes John after the above manner, he reads into the name "Lamb of God" all that the Church and himself meant by it. In other words, the key to the conception is not in Psalm xxiii., but in the Paschal Lamb of Exodus, or in the martyred Servant of Jehovah in Isaiah liii. Long before the Fourth Gospel was written, Jesus, at the institution of the Supper had spoken words which made the Supper the inauguration of the final and forever

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determinative stage in His ministry, and prescribed for all time the interpretation of His death. His body and blood were then presented as a sacrificial means by which the reconciliation of men with God, for which He had laboured and suffered, would be effected. This was the aspect of Jesus' work which most indelibly wrought itself into the souls of His followers, and it explains why after the Resurrection, as Prof. Bacon says, "not only Paul but those who before him had come to the vision of the glorified Redeemer, refused to go back to the mere gospel of Galilee, taking instead the new and larger Gospel of Atonement in the blood of the Crucified" (Bacon, *Jesus and Paul*, p. 35).

The conviction that Christ died as the Bearer of sins not His own was also inseparable from any just consideration of the manner of His death. He had been adjudged a criminal and nailed upon a cross; and whatever superscription Pilate might put over His head, another, derived from the Jewish Scriptures, silently affixed itself, viz.: "He that is hanged (on a tree) is the curse of God" (Deut. xxi. 23; Gal. iii. 13). The numbering of Christ with the transgressors had been brought about not only by man in the person of His Jewish executioners, but by the predetermined counsel of God as expressed in the prophets. Further, Jesus Himself had consented to it, for had He not through all His earthly life identified Himself with the outcast and the lost

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in the task of restoring their souls to God ? First, therefore, He died by the will of God for sins, and, secondly, as the sins were not His own, He died vicariously. Here the clouds which at first had enveloped the Cross, shutting out the light of heaven, parted, and the followers of the Crucified gazed into the unfathomable depths of the love of God (Rom. v. 8 ; John iii. 16) : " Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf " (2 Cor. v. 21). The fourth evangelist, therefore, only joins with the whole New Testament Church when in the frontispiece of his Gospel, so to speak, he presents Jesus as the Lamb of God.

CONFESSIONS OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

In this Gospel in which, as we have seen, the beginning is viewed from the end, it excites no surprise that the first disciples recognise Jesus from the start as Messiah, Son of God, the King of Israel. That which was latent in their first stammering impressions the evangelist supplies, and rightly ; for the reality of the creeds is in that surrender of the soul which precedes articulate utterance. If two or more disciples, following a hint of John, go after Jesus, and at His invitation stay with Him that day (i. 35-40), and after that stay with Him for the rest of their lives, it does not matter what they really

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say at the beginning, or whether they say anything at all. But if we put it in words, let us use the words which flow of themselves when experience has had its perfect work. From this point of view we have assigned to creeds, perhaps, too regulative and *a priori* a function. The important thing is that the disciple should by experience discover something, and then, going out, be able to say what he has *found* (i. 40-41). This Eureka is the real basis of the creeds.

The question of the timid disciples is "Rabbi, where is Thy home?" Jesus answers, "Come, and you shall see." Usually these words are taken to mean that Jesus had an earthly lodging, which the disciples saw. But is this necessarily the meaning? Had Jesus a home on earth, or was His dwelling-place in *God*, and was this the secret which the disciples came to perceive that day, and which held them to Him for all the days to come?

In the case of Nathanael whom Philip brings to Jesus (i. 43-51), reminiscence of some incident and a certain idealism both contribute to the evangelist's narrative. Nathanael, who is not mentioned by the Synoptists, has been identified with Bartholomew, with Matthew, and even with Paul by some who see no reason for pinning the fourth evangelist down at every point to external history! There are those also who think that he is the Beloved Disciple himself. If, however, this last identification were to

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be accepted, we should have to abandon the theory of a Jerusalem-origin for the Beloved Disciple, since Nathanael appears later as "of Cana in Galilee" (xxi. 2). Whoever he is, Nathanael stands for a pure and high-souled type of young Jewish manhood, a thorough representative of the best religious traditions of Israel. Very striking is the contrast between such a disciple's first thought of Jesus, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and the Master's first thought of him "Behold truly an Israelite, in whom guile is not." Nathanael was at first prejudiced against Jesus on account of His Galilean origin, but afterwards yielded under profound impressions of Jesus' power to discover him to himself, as expressed figuratively in the word "When thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee." The sheltering fig-tree has been thought by some to stand for the Judaism in which the disciple was reared.

The charge that Jesus was a Galilean, cradled in a primitive society, and untouched by the great world's life, its political, social and economic problems, is still sometimes heard, and the conclusion drawn that Jesus has little or no guidance to offer to a perplexed modern civilisation. All this forgets that the human problem in Galilee in Jesus' time was not quite so simple as such theorists would have us imagine. A cross-section of Galilean life in Jesus' time would have revealed the germ or

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actuality of many of the developed problems of to-day. There was political restlessness, irreligion, rampant materialism. It was possible in Galilee to be so taken up with the world as to lose the soul. But there is another and greater reason for not being affected by the short-sighted criticism which turns on Jesus being "a Galilean." If Jesus of Nazareth declares and reveals to the modern man His own inward being, and points the way to God, then, be He of Nazareth or not, the attitude of that man to Jesus should not be other than Nathanael's. The Gospel of Jesus does not contain the explicit laws on which a modern polity may be founded, but if it reveals man to himself, and then reveals God to him, it is bringing to bear on society a greater influence than laws. It is doing "what the Law could not do" (Rom. viii. 3).

We have still to note the concluding words of Jesus to Nathanael (i. 51). Underneath the whole passage lies the thought of Jacob and his dream. The father of the elect race had seen in vision at Bethel a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the angels of God ascending and descending on it. This vision, symbolic of God's communion with His chosen people, gleams in some way through the whole history of Israel. And what is now affirmed by Jesus is that for the true "Israelite" this contact with the skies, this communion with God, will be realised in Him. He is the Reconciler, the Mediator,

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through whom is established the essential point of contact between every man's life and God. But it is possible to suggest also another meaning. Nathanael has confessed Jesus as the Messiah, the King of Israel (i. 49). This is much, but he will live to see a greater thing. He will see Jesus enthroned in heavenly glory as the Lord of all. This is the secret, now hidden from all the disciples, which will yet break from the skies. If the company here addressed could be supposed to include the Beloved Disciple, whether in the person of Nathanael or in that of some other member of the group, we might see in the word of Jesus here spoken the origin of the belief that the Disciple would not die till Jesus came (xxi. 20-23).

THE "SIGN" AT CANA IN GALILEE

The miracles of Jesus are regarded by the fourth evangelist primarily as *signs*, "the revealing medium of a mighty spiritual presence," and therefore after the testimony of John, and the confessions of the first disciples, he records an act of Jesus by which His historical manifestation became complete. Jesus and His disciples were present at a marriage in Cana. As the wine failed, the mother of Jesus spoke to her Son as if to suggest that now was the "hour" for Him to reveal His glory. Jesus at that moment was thinking of a very different hour ;

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nevertheless He did not refuse. Availing himself of the six jars of stone, which the Jewish laws of purification required to be in the house, He had them filled with water, and when the water was drawn and brought to the president of the feast it was found to have been changed into wine. So Jesus by a "sign" manifested His glory, and His disciples believed on Him (ii. 1-11).

In what sense did the evangelist intend us to understand this incident? On the one hand, it is certainly possible that he both received and transmitted it as the record of an actual happening, by which the divine glory of Jesus was materially proved. In this case literal water was turned into literal wine: the transformation effected by Jesus at the Galilean feast was of physical elements. But even if the evangelist so interpreted the tradition, he doubtless saw in the incident more than an outward event. The miracles of the Fourth Gospel are "signs" in a double sense. They not only manifest the divine glory of Jesus, but they are charged with allegorical significance. Even therefore if the changing of the water into wine is understood by the evangelist as a literal event, it requires to be read finally with the eye of the spirit. The evangelist shows us a "mystery."

On the other hand, we would do well to keep in mind that the instinct to express spiritual ideas in allegorical form is native to the Oriental mind. Such

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a mind uses physical symbols to convey or represent the realities of the spirit, and by consequence the tradition of the transformation of the water at Cana may have been intended in an allegorical sense. Certainly if allegorical methods of interpretation are admissible, some colour is lent to their application in the present case by the fact that the water transformed by Jesus is contained in vessels intended for Jewish religious rites, and that the Saviour has previously, without explanation on the evangelist's part of any external motive, alluded to His "hour," i.e., the sacrificial death on Calvary (vii. 6, 30 ; viii. 20 ; xii. 23 ; xiii. 1 ; xvii. 1), as "not yet come." On an allegorical understanding of the incident, the turning of the water into wine would be a vivid symbolic statement of what Christ did for the religious life of Judaism. He found religion impoverished, reduced to a mere system of external purifications, and He made it centre round a higher gift. He replaced the water of Judaism by the sacrament-wine of the new covenant, substituted a new righteousness, provided a holier means of grace, and that at a time when the death on Calvary, when He could say "It is finished," was yet remote. Such a precipitation of spiritual truths in the form of an allegorical incident might then be regarded as having taken place in a past stage of the tradition, or it might be ascribed to the Beloved Disciple's teaching.

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On the whole, however, from the fact of the evangelist's calling it a "beginning" of signs, it would appear that the evangelist regarded the miracle at Cana as an actual event, parallel to the other "signs" which he will record. This does not, of course, exclude his seeing in it any or all of the symbolic meanings which have been explained.

CHAPTER III

The Supersession of Judaism. The New Birthright and Access to the Father

(ii. 12—iv. 42)

CONSIDERATION has been already given to the motive which leads the fourth evangelist to place the Cleansing of the Temple at the beginning of the ministry of Christ (Chap. I, p. 22). The incident belongs to the Synoptic history, and all that needs to be pointed out here is that it fitly introduces a section of the Gospel which has for its central theme the supersession of Judaism by the new religion of Christ.

Some attention is necessary, however, to the question of the Jews which follows the Cleansing, and to the answer which Jesus gave on that occasion.

THE NEW TEMPLE OF CHRIST'S BODY

The Jews ask by what "sign," i.e., by what miracle, Jesus is prepared to substantiate His claim to authority over the temple. His answer is "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it." The Jews mistake Jesus' words for a reference to the material temple which, begun by Herod

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B.C. 20-19, was now in the forty-sixth year of its reconstruction. But, the evangelist states, Jesus "was speaking of the temple of His body," and he adds that after the Resurrection the disciples remembered His words (ii. 13-22).

Thus, according to the evangelist, the Resurrection was the sign which Jesus gave to His contemporaries as the proof of His authority to assume control of the earthly Temple. This is in accordance with all early Christian thinking which sees in the Resurrection the supreme verification of Jesus' claims. By it He had been made by God both Lord and Christ (Acts ii. 36); by it all power had been given to Him in heaven and on earth (Matt. xxviii. 18). The whole proof of Christianity is that *Jesus lives*. Retrospectively the Resurrection becomes the real sign which underlies the often enigmatic words of Jesus during His earthly life. But granting that Jesus on certain great occasions appealed to the arbitrament of the future, and spoke with unshaken confidence in His Father's power to raise Him after death, the question remains whether the words about the destroying of the old and the raising of the new temple, if Jesus spoke them exactly in this form, referred immediately to His death and subsequent reanimation.

In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus certainly speaks of the literal passing away of the earthly temple in Jerusalem. Even if the charge laid against Him

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at His trial, that He said, "I will destroy this temple which is made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands" (Mark xiv. 58) was not substantiated, it remains that He spoke such never-forgotten words as "Dost thou see these great buildings? there shall not be left here one stone upon another which shall not be torn down" (Mark xiii. 2). The message of Jesus to His generation was delivered under the shadow of the impending calamity of the year 70. Jesus predicted that the Kingdom would be taken from Judah, and given to other nations. Did He with this conjoin the assurance that, though the earthly and visible institutions perished, there would be raised up *a new and invisible temple of the Spirit*, a religion without material rites, in which "true worshippers should worship the Father in spirit and in truth"?

We cannot tell. Nevertheless the analogy of Old Testament prophecy with its forecast of a New Covenant realising the conditions of a truly spiritual religion (Jer. xiii. 3 if.), offers a certain support to the supposition that He did so, and the probability is increased by the directness with which early Christianity from Stephen onwards accepted the supersession of Judaism by the new "reasonable worship" of the Christian Church (cp. Rom. xii. 1). It may be therefore that the saying "Destroy this

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temple, and in three days I will raise it," which there is no reason to think unhistorical, was uttered originally with a more general reference than the evangelist here assigns to it. Jesus may have been alluding to the passing away of the old covenant with its material institutions, and to the rise on earth of a new spiritual worship of God the Father which would depend no longer on Jewish rites and privileges. In other words, the original saying may not have been a *Resurgam* of Jesus in the first instance, but a prophecy of the new covenant and of the new Church of God. There is a distinct probability that this view is correct. Later on, however, the saying was interpreted as a direct prediction of the resurrection of Jesus. This was the easier because it was through the resurrection of Jesus that the new Church arose. We find St. Paul in fact identifying the life of the Church with the risen life of Jesus, calling the Church "the body of Christ" (Col. i. 18, 24; Eph. i. 23). Thus the two ideas fell together into one.

In any case Jesus here nominates, in place of the existing temple, a new centre of faith and of religious interest.

THE NEW BIRTH GIVING ENTRANCE TO THE KINGDOM

On the New Temple of Christ's Body follows appropriately the doctrine of the New Birth or

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Birthright of Christ's followers. This is announced in the conversation of Jesus with Nicodemus in the period following the last episode. The evangelist explains that when Jesus was in Jerusalem at the Feast many "put trust" in Him, because of the impression produced by his "signs," but that Jesus did not "trust Himself" to believers of this sort (ii. 23-25). Their constant hankering after external evidence of God did not provide the basis of a real confidence on His part. We need not go into the question what relation the Nicodemus who now comes forward as a case in point bears to the Naq-Dimon of whom Jewish rabbinical literature speaks in connection with the last days of Jerusalem. The Naq-Dimon in question, who was a benefactor of pilgrims to the temple, appears to have been an adherent of the Nazarene, but as the name is not likely to have been uncommon, it would be venturesome to draw conclusions respecting his relation to the Nicodemus of the Fourth Gospel.

On the other hand, it is quite possible that, while the Nicodemus of our Gospel is a historical personage of whom the special tradition followed by the evangelist preserved definite reminiscences, he is at the same time put forward as a *type*. He stands for the highly-placed Jew who makes tentative approaches to Christ, drawn on by something which he "sees" in Him, but who is not prepared to come out into the open, and who will not lay

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aside reserves. The motive which inspires his overtures is a desire to annex Christ rather than a willingness to be himself annexed. But this is not true faith or coming to the light.

In the first place, such an inquirer, while looking for the Kingdom of God, takes an external view of it. The Kingdom, as he conceives it, comes by observation, casting its shadow before in the form of significant happenings. It is not an inward possession—inward satisfaction does not belong to Nicodemus—but a hope, a dream, shared by his contemporaries, of a coming age of bliss, which God will cause to break from the skies when His purpose to save His people Israel is complete. Nicodemus, as a typical Jew, asks for “signs,” and such he thinks he sees in the miracles of Jesus.

Secondly, such an enquirer knows no other birth, or birthright, than that which consists in descent from Abraham. His confidence is in a physical prerogative, a birth of the flesh. Laying the stress on this, he has come like his fellow-Jews to look at everything in an outward way, or, as Christians say, “after the flesh.” Doubtless he has heard of John the Baptist, and of the holy scorn which that prophet had poured on Abrahamic descent considered as a passport to the Kingdom of God, but Nicodemus has never taken such incredible language to himself. To have done so would have been to stultify the system of things of which he was himself

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a part. He would have had to accept ordinary baptism like sinners who did not know the Law.

Finally, such an inquirer is a traditionalist, brought up to subject both mind and life to an external system of ordinances. From the Christian standpoint he has never known what it is to live, to be in direct contact with the life-giving Spirit of God, for tradition is the opposite of the Spirit. The whole religious experience of Nicodemus has been at second-hand. His faith, his thoughts of God, his prayers even, his holiest aspirations belong to a system, and are not really his own. He has never had first-hand experience of the power of God, and therefore he has never had a first-rate experience of any kind. He is a type of those men, among whom Saul of Tarsus was reared in the study of the Law, who lived under the Law, and though feeling perhaps that a hiatus existed between its precepts and their practice, did not confess to themselves the gaping unreality of their position. "The elders behaved in the presence of the younger men as if the Law could be kept; one believed it on the strength of another, and did not acknowledge the impossibility to himself."¹ One man only in that circle confessed the acute unreality of the legalistic position (Rom. vii. 7-25), and through the presentation of Christ to his soul discovered the difference that a direct surrender

¹ Weinel, *St. Paul, The Man and His Message*, p. 73.

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to the Spirit of God makes. That man could then say : " If any man is in Christ, *a new creation takes place.*"

✓ If this is a fair analysis of the man who came to Jesus by night, it enables us to understand the Master's words to him, and the reason of his surprise. The first thing he has to learn from Christ is that the Kingdom of God does not come to man by external approach, but that man comes to it by a spiritual birth. This is the only passage of the Fourth Gospel where the Kingdom of God, so familiar to us as the theme of Jesus' preaching in the Synoptic Gospels, is mentioned. And even here, Jesus' words imply that the Kingdom is not to be looked at apocalyptically, as a thing which belongs to a yet future age, but inwardly or mystically, as a thing which transcending time belongs to the eternal present of the soul. In the second place it is pointed out that the birth by which men enter the Kingdom can come only "from above." There are two worlds, flesh and spirit, and to each belongs a separate door of birth ; men cannot inherit either world without being individually born into it. The claim thus made for the spiritual world astounds Nicodemus, whose mind is entangled in ideas of physical descent. He can understand a new start as necessary for the sinners who came to John, but he is at a loss to know what the new birth can mean for him. Therefore the words of Christ are repeated

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in the explanatory form, in which doubtless we are to recognise a gloss of the evangelist, "Except a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." That is to say, Nicodemus must come out into the open as a disciple of Christ. The new birth and the new life in the Spirit are things which are verified in Christian experience through that surrender of the soul to God which takes place in baptism. If Nicodemus had previously, like others, looked askance at John's mission to Israel, it would give the reference to the "water" here additional point, but the fact that he had done so is by no means necessarily implied. The baptism which is *both* of water and of the Spirit, which has both the symbol and the reality, is Christian baptism, and therefore it is to Christian confession and surrender of the soul that Nicodemus is directed. For the birth of the flesh is one thing; the birth of the Spirit is another. A man needs to be *born* into the perceptions and evidences which constitute the spiritual world. Any astonishment which Nicodemus professes as to the means by which such a birth can be expedited is unreasonable. Christ in effect admits that the "mystery" of godliness is confessedly great, but a man should not forget the "power" of it. For—and here Jesus calls attention to the wind which as they sit on the house-top, is stirring in the dark trees—the Spirit in its work of regeneration is like

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the breath of the night-wind, as mysterious and yet as real. Nicodemus as a teacher of Israel should know these things. From the Christian point of view they are plain enough: "We speak what we know, and confirm on evidence what we have seen." If Nicodemus does not take account of "earthly" things, i.e., psychological facts belonging to everyday experience, how will he understand "heavenly" things, e.g., the love of God manifested on the Cross of Christ? (iii. 1-12).

Thus the new birth and the new birthright take the place of the old. The demand conforms to verifiable experience, the experience of the Church of God in Christ. Regeneration comes within the range of what we call *scientific fact* (iii. 11-12). In Christ a man becomes a new personality. He enters into a new world of spiritual values, and on a *personal* religious experience. As Prof. William James and others have shown, the emergence of a new life within the old, constituting the experience of the "twice-born," is part of the psychological reality of the world. The "regeneration" of our passage is the Christian form of that experience (cp. Chap. II, pp. 65-67), and follows normally from the action of Christ on the soul which surrenders to Him. The expression "birth from above" is not Synoptic (Chap. I, pp. 37-38). Nevertheless, it has its almost exact counterpart in Jesus' word, "Except you turn, and become as little children, you will never

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enter into the Kingdom of Heaven ” (Matt. xviii. 3), and in the light of these words regeneration should be thought of in ethical terms, as depending upon, and consisting in the conversion of the will to God. Only as men turn to God, and begin again at the beginning with Him, do they touch reality, and enter upon a true life of their own.

THE NEW GROUND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The passage which follows bases man's acceptance with God on the ground of Christ's work. He alone, because He has come down from Heaven, can speak to man of heavenly things (iii. 12-13). We do not know where the words to Nicodemus end, nor whether what follows is to be understood as spoken by the Master or by the evangelist. The central conception is the Cross, as that which assures eternal life for the believer in Christ. This has the same place in the new economy of salvation as the serpent lifted up by Moses once had in the wilderness. The Son of Man has to be “lifted up”; this, a favourite phrase of the fourth evangelist, keeps before the reader the fact that the Cross was Christ's glory (xii. 23, 32). It raised Him to the elevation from which He *reigns* and draws men to Himself. Because in the Cross we have the sovereign effort of the love of God, we have also the

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sovereign attraction: "God loved the world so much that He gave up His only Son." No theological explanation is here added to the fact itself. There is no statement why the Cross was necessary, or how it becomes the means of salvation. It contents the evangelist to hoist the fact before us against the background of the love of God, and to let it do its own work. And indeed to a greater or less extent all theories of the Atonement have been partial and inadequate as compared with the power of the fact (iii. 14-21).

In this passage the Fourth Gospel gives us the equivalent of the Pauline doctrine of Justification by Faith. God's purpose in giving His Son was that "whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (iii. 16). What came to St. Paul in his conversion was essentially a new *theology*, a new vision of God. Hitherto, like Nicodemus, he had based man's acceptance with God on the ability of man to satisfy Divine justice. Man must ascend on bleeding hands and knees the ladder of the Law—to God! But when in mid-career this zealot for Judaism was arrested by the presentation to his soul of Christ, the whole system, in which he had put his confidence fell in pieces about his feet. His conversion was the *reductio ad absurdum* of his past religious philosophy. God by a supreme act of grace had made foolish the wisdom with which Saul had been wise. Henceforth he had simply to

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depend like a new-born child upon the action of God in Christ, aiming only not to receive the grace in vain. The image of Christ filled the centre of his thought of God, and the Cross formed the centre of his thought of Christ. Christ on the Cross—that which had hitherto been the offence—became the fascinating centre of all spiritual interest and adoration, and drew the soul of Paul into ever widening regions of theological insight. Instead of man ascending to God by merit, he found that God descends to man by grace, even to the extent of clasping the Cross of sin to his breast. It is the same thought which fills this section of the Fourth Gospel. God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world. This was what the Jews had expected of the Messiah. To them the work of the Coming One was almost entirely exhausted in judicial and punitive functions. No one had dreamed that the Messiah would take on Him the task of restoring the souls of the “lost ” to God, nay, make Himself a sacrifice for them. But this He did, and the Cross is His *throne*, from which He blesses or condemns according as men come to Him there, or stay away, fearing that their deeds should be found out.

We can only dimly in our age imagine what a revolution in religious thinking this theology of the Cross brought with it. That the love of God should speak to man in the language of sacrifice, His

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own sacrifice—no one had ever dreamed of God's relation to man being like that. But what made it credible was just the light which the Cross itself let in on a soul like Paul's. Experiences like his kept repeating themselves. They were indeed normal, and out of the experience came the theology.

The chapter concludes with some further testimonies of the Baptist who now comes forward as a witness to that Justification by Faith of which we have just heard. The Baptist urges that the Spirit was bestowed on Christ not in measured degree, as on the prophets, but in its whole fulness. We may note in passing the various angles from which the unique position of Christ in Christian faith is presented. Jesus is the Son of God, first of all, metaphysically in virtue of His heavenly origin (iii. 31); secondly, historically in virtue of God's unlimited gift to Him of the Spirit (iii. 34); thirdly, ethically in virtue of God's love (iii. 35)—a triple ground of proof (iii. 23-36.)

THE NEW ACCESS TO THE FATHER

The return of Jesus to Galilee was made by way of Samaria which Josephus assures us was the customary route of Galilean pilgrims to the feasts.¹

¹ Josephus, *Antiq.* XX. 6. 1.

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Yet something more than custom lay in the "necessity" which the evangelist sees in this particular journey of Jesus. That proclamation of the new temple and the new birth which had already been made in Jerusalem must also be made in Samaria, where it will take the form of access for Samaritan as well as Jew in one spirit to the common Father. Since the schism of the apostate priest Manasseh in B.C. 432, when a rival temple to that of Jerusalem was built on Gerizim, the ways of Jew and Samaritan had led apart. They had the Pentateuch in common, the Sabbath, and other observances, but the Jews derided the Samaritans as a "foolish people" (Ecclus. i. 26), and hated them as schismatics. This ill-will the Samaritans reciprocated. The Samaritan religion was at best a hybrid thing, in which pagan ideas had been grafted on to a Mosaic root. Before the Fourth Gospel was written, Samaria had already in Simon Magus and others produced fantastic theosophies which were in certain ways the forerunners of the later Gnostic systems.

But to Jesus there was a harvest in Samaria. Luke represents that He not seldom spoke kindly of Samaritans in spite of a repulse which His company once sustained at their hands (Luke ix. 52f., x. 53f., xvii. 17f.). But of religious dealings with them on the part of Jesus the Fourth Gospel alone contains any record. There can be no doubt that in the interview of Jesus with the Samaritan woman

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and her townsfolk, as in the interview with Nicodemus, genuine reminiscences of word and deed have been preserved, though in both cases the evangelist has given the episodes an enlarged significance by dwelling on the universal principles on which they turn. In the present case the abolition of the dividing wall between Jew and Samaritan is the central thought. The hour is not merely coming, but *is now* when the distinction between Jerusalem and Gerizim shall cease to apply, and true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: this without prejudice to the fact that hitherto the Jew had been the medium of Divine revelation, whereas the Samaritans had worshipped they knew not what. In giving full room to the expression of this principle, the evangelist has his eye on the first Christian mission to Samaria, when the Samaritans were for the first time invited to leave Gerizim without being brought to Jerusalem. To this extent early Christian history blends its features here with a tradition of Jesus' life.

Nevertheless, as a psychological interest in the woman and in Christ's dealing with her has a very large part in the evangelist's narrative, we cannot resolve the incident into a mere exposition of principles. It is and remains the story of a soul which was lost and found.

Sychar is identified with the modern village of

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'Askar, not far from Nablus (Shechem). Near at hand, on the slopes of Ebal and Gerizim, tradition located the first promulgation of the religion of Jehovah in Canaan.¹ The well anciently known as Jacob's is probably the present Bir Ya'kub, ten minutes to the south of 'Askar. The fact that a woman professing personal indifference to religion leaves the village where there are other wells as good, and travels this distance to draw water, possibly implies belief in the special virtues of this fountain, and argues superstition in a worldly-wise soul. If so, additional point is imparted to the Master's words that if she knew the gift of God, she would have asked for "living water." She does not ask this. Her nature has hardened into indifference, but she does not care. She does not even mind her life being known, provided people do not speak to her about it. She will outstare the world's glance, carry her trouble if need be defiantly, and avoid the subject of religion. When Christ speaks to her of the gift of God and of the living water, she has a sense of what is meant, but she will affect incredulity: "Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep" (iv. 11). She will not allow that there is any water but what she sees before her. She diverts attention to the subject of Jacob (iv. 12); she will talk about the well, about Jacob, about the Jews, about anything, if thereby she can evade the

¹ Sir G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 333-334.

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personal question. Even after the secret of her life is out, she attempts to plunge the whole religious issue into doubt by dragging in the Jerusalem-Gerizim controversy ; " Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, but you say, etc. " (iv. 20). In other words, Christ is a *Jew*, and to all He says there attaches the inevitable limitation which is given in that fact. When this prejudice breaks down before the more searching presentation of religion which Jesus makes (iv. 21f.), she has still one resource left. She appeals from the present to the future, from Jesus to the coming of the " Messiah," whom the Samaritans expected on the ground of certain passages in the Pentateuch, in particular Gen. xlix. 10 and Deut. xviii. 15, and whom they conceived naturally not as a Davidic king, but as a prophet or law-giver, a Taheb or " converter " of souls ; He, she says, will tell us all we need to know, and therefore we can leave the question till He comes. This prejudice too fails, and thus disarmed and convicted she stands face to face with the true Messiah.

The whole narrative has for its central interest the effort of a sinful soul to escape the light and love of God. It may indeed be that in the woman's story the story of the heathen or half-heathen world is compressed. Very possibly the word " Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband " (iv. 18) is an allusion in the

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genuinely Oriental manner to the past religious history of the Samaritan people. Five peoples of heathen extraction, each bringing its own Baal (lord, husband) with it, had been settled in Samaria in the eighth century (2 Kings xvii. 24ff.), and though they had afterwards amalgamated with the Israelitish residue in the land, and given up their former gods, their relation to Jehovah had never been pure. But even if this be allowed, it remains transparently clear that the evangelist's primary interest is not in allegory but in the presentation of the Gospel to an individual soul. Let us ask then how does Christ deal with the woman. His first question is to ask, *Is she satisfied?* (iv. 13-14.) Of course she is not though she affects not to notice the point. Then comes the question, *Is her life all that it might be?* (iv. 16). Of course it is not; that she has to confess. In other words, Christ appeals to her first by that which is deepest in human life, the thirst for God and for peace with Him. Secondly He takes her by what is most evident in human life, the sense of sin and the longing for purity. By the application of these two tests the woman is brought to the point of confessing that Christ is a *Prophet* (iv. 19). This is the first stage of Christian discovery. Then when she takes refuge again in the mists of religious controversy, Christ asks, in effect, Has real religion in any case to do with these disputed questions? Is not religion a matter of the spirit

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and of the spirit's sincerity before God? This eventuates in the question, Who is the authority? Who is the Divine *Messiah*? and with this question a new and higher stage of Christian discovery begins (cp. Mark viii. 27-29).

It is worthy of note that the conversation with the Samaritan woman serves as occasion for announcing the supreme truth underlying the new dispensation, viz., that God is Spirit, and that real worship is "in spirit and reality," i.e., consists in *inward* devotion to the holiest that can be conceived. "The necessary thing is that men should see God as He is, and should not worship anything that He is not." True religion is "in spirit," because it consists in an inward personal relation to the Person loved and worshipped, and depends not on tradition or authority but on experience. Again, it is "in truth," because it depends on true vision and adequate knowledge of God. Men have misunderstood the Highest, and still attribute to Him things that are not consonant with His perfection of fatherly goodness. His image has been blurred and confused through superstition or the hard heart, and needs to be seen again in its perfect holiness, goodness and truth.

The principle that God is truly approached only in "spirit" involves the deposition of Jerusalem as "the place where men ought to worship," and fitly unites the present section with what has gone

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before. The new birth, the new ground of redemption, the new access to the Father, mark the supersession of Judaism by the new religion of Christ.

THE GREATNESS OF THE FUTURE HARVEST

The Woman of Samaria, like the Greeks who come to Christ later on, stands for the greatness and immediacy of the spiritual harvest. The words of Jesus produce a profound impression on her mind, and she goes off to the village, forgetting her water-jar in the interest of her new discovery. But Christ too is absorbed. His disciples return with bread, but He does not seem to notice. It is as when after the Voice at His baptism He went into the wilderness to think things out with God. Then, as though to excuse His inattention, He says, "I have food to eat of which you do not know," and presently "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to finish His work" (iv. 32, 34). To Christ nothing was so absorbing as the task of bringing men into the Kingdom. He is seeing at this moment of the travail of His soul. But by contrast His followers are prevented from sharing in this greatest of all satisfactions by a failure to believe that the harvest is so near. They think of all the

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steps that have to be taken, of all the preparatory processes that have to be gone through.

This now is the point of Jesus' words to the disciples—and here undoubtedly the evangelist has the Church of his own day in view—"Do not say, Four months still, and then the harvest comes." That may apply to literal grain in the fields; it does not apply to the souls of men. At this moment a group of villagers is sighted coming across the fields with the woman. "See," says the Master, "I say to you, Lift up your eyes, and behold that the fields are white to harvest" (iv. 35), white with confession, that is, white with spiritual longing, white with eagerness to hear and to receive. Such a harvest is waiting for disciples who will grasp the situation, and with a strong hand enter on the task of reaping. The preparatory work is done. Under the ministry of life's experiences the outer covering which wraps the souls of men, the crust, the shell, is, as in this woman's case, worn thin, that the light may enter. There are those in Samaria who will presently confess that Jesus is indeed "the world's Saviour" (iv. 37-42).

The Greatness of the Harvest appropriately closes a section of the Gospel which has for its theme the difference which Christ has made in religious history. The Church is apt to think that the harvest is more distant than it is. It forgets that God's unseen agencies are always preparing the soil,

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that everywhere there are those who in spite of superficial gaiety and nonchalance are dissatisfied, are feeling the thorn of sin, and are crying out for the living God. How near the Kingdom was to Jesus ! And He would teach us that things need not all work out along the laborious lines which our unbelief prefigures.

CHAPTER IV

The Authority and Work of the Son. Christ in Relation to Moses. Christ the Bread of Life

(v.—vi.)

THE fourth chapter of the Gospel ends with a visit of Jesus to Galilee, and with the healing at Capernaum of the son of a court-official of Antipas (iv. 43-54). But immediately afterwards we find Jesus in Jerusalem at a feast of the Jews, probably Pentecost. It may be therefore that, as many scholars think, some dislocation of the original order of sections has taken place as between Chapter v. and Chapter vi.; but as no satisfactory means of rearrangement offers itself, we shall adhere to the traditional order.

The present section is chiefly concerned with the claims and authority of Christ in relation to Moses, the great law-giver of the Jewish people. In Chapter v. this question is discussed with primary reference to the Sabbath law of Judaism, in Chapter vi. with primary reference to the Old Testament manna, or

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bread of God. For the true interpretation of both, as of all Scripture, men must look to Christ, the Son of the Father.

THE INCIDENT AT THE POOL OF BETHZATHA

The Healing of the Impotent Man which opens Chapter v. is not recorded for its own sake, but because it leads up to the great principle expressed in the words "My Father works till now, and I work" (v. 17), and introduces a discourse on the work and authority of the Son of God in relation to Moses. We have here a very clear instance of that homiletical use and disposition of material, out of which the Fourth Gospel has intermediately arisen (cp. Chap. I, pp. 34-35). Verse 17, in which we have an undoubted logion of Jesus, is the "text," the healing at the pool is the "lesson," the rest is the sermon. The invalid by the Pool stands for the sinner in need of pardon and healing, but unable to help himself. This is the point of the question, "Wilt thou be made whole?" which asked of a physical sufferer might seem needless, but which applied to a sinner goes to the root of the matter, his desire to be saved.

For the vexed question of the name and site of the Pool, reference may be made to Sir G. A. Smith's *Jerusalem*, Vol. II, p. 64. The statement that an

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angel descended at times into the Pool is not part of the genuine text, but a later gloss. It is an overstraining of probability to attach an allegorical significance to such features of the story as the thirty-eight years or the five porches, though ingenuity has not been wanting to turn the whole incident into a pathological analysis of Judaism and its five books of the Law. Nearer the truth is it to see in the incident a general delineation of sin and its effects. The invalid prostrate by the side of the fountain, and despairing of a cure, lamenting his evil condition, and yet not certainly willing to quit it, stands for the sinner in need of grace and salvation. It is Christ's will to set such men on their feet, and to start them on a holier way (v. 1-15).

This act of healing on the Sabbath provokes the Jews, and introduces a discourse of Jesus.

CHRIST'S WORK IN TIME CORRESPONDS TO THE ETERNAL WORK OF THE FATHER

The present passage of the Fourth Gospel has a certain parallel in Mark ii. 1-iii. 6, where also the subject of dispute is Jesus' relation to the Mosaic Law. There Jesus, taken to task for healing on the Sabbath, answers that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; in other words the purpose of God in the Sabbath-law is only to be

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understood by relation to the humane ends which the Sabbath serves, and these Jesus as "Son of Man" will authoritatively declare. Later in the same passage Jesus asks His critics roundly if there is any time when it is not permitted to do *good* (Mark iii. 4). Can we think of God putting any restriction upon the doing of good? This now is the point of the seventeenth verse of the present chapter: "My Father works until now, and I work." Jewish legalism had understood the "rest" of God on the Seventh Day as a suspension of all activity, and under the influence of this idea it had conceived His whole relation to His creatures as static. This is declared by Jesus to be out of correspondence with the highest thoughts of God. God is always working. He has never ceased working. And for the same reason Jesus heals on the Sabbath.

This is one of those passages in which Jesus flashes a new sudden light on the Infinite, by which accustomed views are turned into darkness. God did not end His work on the Seventh Day; it is going on for ever. If this contradicts the rigid construction put by the Jews on the Sabbath-law, it still more rules out the attitude of mind which made Thomas Carlyle in one of his pessimistic moods declare that God never does anything at all. Jesus takes the first chapter of Genesis and makes it not merely the beginning, but the epitome of history. God made Light; He divided the Light from the

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Darkness ; He brought Order out of Chaos ; He made Life ; and finally He made Man. He did not do these things once only : He is doing them all the time. He was not on the side of Light, of Law, of Life, and of Man once only : He is always on their side. All the more so, because, so far as man is concerned, it is a *new* creation which is always proceeding, a work of redemption, the setting of the broken on their feet, the pardoning of the penitent, the making of all things new. For this reason Jesus also labours, working all day, and every day.

The Feast of Pentecost—if this was the Feast referred to in v. 1—commemorated the giving of the Law, and therefore it is natural that Jesus' discourse on this occasion should bear on His authority in relation to the most representative of legal ordinances, the Sabbath. Aristotle, commenting on the relation of equity to law, says that law has sometimes to be modified by regard for the meaning or interpretation which the Law-giver would put on his enactments if he himself were present.¹ This idea finds illustration in the present passage of John, and also in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew. In both of these cases the Interpreter of the Law is the Son of the Father, who has the Father's mind. In John indeed the relationship is stated in a metaphysical way. A necessity transcending moral causes automatically governs the

¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1137b, 15.

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correspondence of the Son's will with the Father's. Yet even in John the ethical conception is not wanting. Jesus has the Father's love, and therefore intuitive ethical vision of every movement of the Father's will (v. 20). An instance is taken. It is the Father's work to raise and give life to the dead, but this also is what the Son is doing all the time. Again, it is the Father's work to judge both the living and the dead, but this too the Son is doing by commission from the Father (v. 21-23. Cp. iii. 18-21). In both cases the authority of Christ to declare and interpret the Father's will with precedence over Moses is borne out by the evidence of *facts*. Does not the work of Christ, when He raises out of sinful lethargy men who, like the invalid by the Pool, have lain supine and listless for half a lifetime, correspond with the Father's will to bring the dead from their graves at the Resurrection? If not, what reality belongs to the confession of converts, like Saul of Tarsus, who speak of their unregenerate life as having been a living death,¹ and yet declare exultingly that God has given them victory through Jesus Christ? By this appeal to Christian experience the authority of the Son of God is completely established (v. 16-30).

To this exposition of the work of Christ reflection on Christian experience, as well as a tradition of Jesus' words, has contributed. Notice that no

¹ Romans vii. 24.

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distinction is drawn in principle between the future resurrection of the body and the present resurrection of the soul through the power of Christ. Both are essentially one work, because the work of Jesus reproduces in time the whole eternal work of the Father. In this principle the Fourth Gospel finds its characteristic evaluation of the apocalyptic element in early Christianity (cp. Chap. I, pp. 23, 38). Resurrection, Judgment, the Coming of the Son of Man, Eternal Life, are no longer considered as belonging entirely to the future—for the simple reason that Christ's work in time corresponds to the full cycle of the Father's purpose.

Such is the answer of Christianity to the challenge from the side of the Jewish Law. Christ is a greater than Moses, and yet in the end His authority must not be conceived as opposed to that of Moses. He has Moses on His side.

THE WITNESS OF SCRIPTURE TO CHRIST

Jesus has witnesses (v. 31-47): not only John, "that burning and shining lamp," who captivated the Jews for a season, and not only His own works which correspond, as we have seen, with all that men can conceive to be Divine, but the still higher witness of the Father. This last the Jews would have recognised if they had at any time heard the Father's voice or seen His form. Here the ultimate appeal

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is to Holy Scripture. The Jews had these books of God to which they attach the highest reverence, and which they invest with the most plenary authority. The claims which they made for the bindingness of every letter have never been exceeded in any other age. Not only so, but they diligently "searched" Scripture, seeking and expounding hidden meanings in their Midrash, and thinking that thereby they made themselves sure of "the life of the world to come." What was the result? The Scriptures witness to Jesus, but the Jews had not shown any inclination to come to Him. To them the reading of the Scripture was an *opus operatum* in itself. The purpose for which it was given had not dawned on them. They even play Scripture against Jesus.

When it is here said of Holy Scripture that it witnesses to Jesus, the reference probably is less to prophetic anticipations of His person than to the consonance of the ethical demand of Scripture with the repentance required by Jesus. Blindness to this ethical demand constitutes the guilt of Judaism in spite of all Jewish professions to the contrary. Jesus does not even need to indict His generation. It stands accused to the face by Moses, in whom it has not believed.

Such facts cannot but have effects upon the Christian understanding of Holy Scripture. It is plain that no external doctrine of Scripture

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guarantees the ends which Scripture was designed to serve. It is also apparent that any doctrine of Scripture which in the extensiveness of its claim of inspiration permits no distinction between the lesser and weightier matters of the Law is of itself an obstacle to spiritual life. Here early Christianity, as opposed to Judaism, comes out into the open with a vital conception of Scripture which turns on the principle that it testifies to Christ ; in other words, Jesus is the measure of the Word of God in Scripture. Jesus Himself exercised a spiritual criticism of the letter of the Old Testament. He rejected the law of retribution in favour of the law of love (Matt. v. 43f.). He gave to the word of Hosea that God "wills to have mercy and not sacrifice" a preference over all ceremonial precepts (Matt. ix. 13 ; xii. 7). He declared the Deuteronomic permission of divorce a concession to the human "hard-heartedness" of an earlier time (Mark x. 2f.). During the temptation in the wilderness there was not one of the suggestions placed before His mind by the prince of this world which might not claim for itself a show of ground in Holy Scripture, but in every case Christ appealed to the deeper sense and purpose of God's word. All this was essentially the application to Scripture of a spiritual criticism, and leads up to the principle that in Christ we have the supreme test of scriptural truth.

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JESUS IN GALILEE. THE FEEDING OF THE MULTITUDE

Attention has already been given to the comparative unimportance of the Galilean ministry of Jesus in the fourth evangelist's narrative, and to the evidence which this feature supplies in favour of the theory that the evangelist followed primarily the tradition of a Jerusalem-witness of Jesus' life.¹ But it would appear that the fourth evangelist had not in any case an exceptionally high opinion of the Galilean public. He represents that Jesus anticipated that He would not find a considerable following in Galilee (iv. 43-44). Out of the whole Galilean ministry the fourth evangelist has selected only two or three incidents for mention, and of these only one, the Feeding of the Five Thousand, is made the subject of any special exposition. This doubtless is because of the centrality of the latter incident and its possession of a mystical meaning far surpassing that of any other incident belonging to the Galilean period, nor shall we be wrong in ascribing this importance to the analogy which the evangelist perceives between the Feeding of the Multitude and the Christian "Agape" or Eucharist. By means of this analogy it is possible to link up the Galilean teaching with the central conception of the

¹ Chap. I, pp. 21, 24f., 49f.

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Jerusalem ministry, viz., Christ's giving of Himself for the life of the world.

Of the incident itself, which belongs to the Synoptic history, not much need be said here. Those who desire to see a discussion of the part which Old Testament and mystical analogies may have had in connection with the narrative of the Feeding, and of the extent to which certain features may be considered allegorical, should consult Dr. James Moffatt's "Approach to the New Testament," Chap. 5. As the interest which gave the incident of the Feeding a central position in the early tradition was undoubtedly its bearing on the *Agape*, it is hardly possible that features from the latter did not blend with the tradition of the Feeding and impart to it increasingly an ideal or symbolical significance. The fourth evangelist does not in external details differ much from the Synoptists. He singles out Philip and Andrew for special mention, and relates that after the incident the Galileans wished to make Jesus their King (vi. 1-15).

On the other hand, it is all-important to the evangelist to establish the symbolic meaning of the incident. He does this, first, by mentioning that at the time when the Feeding occurred Passover was at hand. This at once places the Breaking of Bread in the Wilderness against the background of the central rite of Jewish worship, and facilitates the institution of analogies between it and the Last

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Supper, which stands historically against the same background. Indeed, as the fourth evangelist does not record the Institution of the Supper, we must suppose that he regards the Feeding of the Multitude as in some sense a substitute or equivalent. He reads into the earlier event the significance of the later, and therefore towards the close of the discourse at Capernaum, which follows the Feeding, he records words of Jesus which properly apply only to the symbolic eating of the Sacrament (vi. 51-58). Unless, therefore, the act in the wilderness was intended by Jesus to have the same spiritual significance as the later act in the Upper Room, we must recognise on the part of the evangelist a free combination and use of materials in the Capernaum discourse. Instruction regarding spiritual in comparison with earthly bread, which belongs naturally to the occasion, is rounded off by words about partaking of the flesh and blood of the Son of Man, which can only relate to the Sacrament. But if the evangelist thus attaches a sacramental significance to the Feeding in the Wilderness, it is only in accordance with his whole tendency to see the spiritual in the material, and to view everything *sub specie aeternitatis*.

All this would, of course, be the easier and more natural if this particular combination of ideas goes still further back—to the teaching of the Disciple, on whose authority the evangelist leans, or to the

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homiletical use of the material in the Church (Chap. I, pp. 34-35). And indeed it may quite well be that, for one reason or another, the sacramental interpretation of the act in the wilderness was already fixed and settled in the circles in which the evangelist moved.

THE SERMON AT CAPERNAUM. CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE

The Sermon of Jesus at Capernaum starts from the position that there is a Bread, given by the Son of Man, which is of incomparably greater value than the "perishing" bread which the Galileans seek, inasmuch as it lasts to eternal life, and for it therefore men should "work." This raises the question how does God mean them to work, and to this the answer is that God desires *faith*. The Galileans ask for "signs" on the part of Jesus, and point to the Manna, the bread from heaven, which Moses gave to their fathers. This to them, and to the Jews generally, was the supreme miracle, the *ne plus ultra* even for the Messiah.¹ Jesus makes answer that the Manna was but a symbol of the real Bread of God which coming down from heaven gives life to the world. Such bread they on their part profess to desire. Jesus says it is Himself. He who comes to Him shall never hunger. They,

¹ H. J. Holtzmann.

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however, though they have seen, do not believe. Indeed, they refuse to think it possible that He can give Himself for the life of the world. Nevertheless, Jesus is not disturbed. All whom the Father gives Him will come to Him, and those who so come He will not cast out. Whereas the fathers who ate the Manna in the wilderness died, those who eat of the true heavenly bread of Christ will never die (vi. 26-50).

Thus the first part of the Sermon. It is plain that two thoughts are combined and worked together : first, the thought of a heavenly sustenance, of which even the Manna was but the unsubstantial shadow, secondly, the thought of Jesus as the source of that heavenly provision. If now in the Sermon Jesus is Himself *identified* with that heavenly bread, this is due to the presence of a thought which will meet us more directly in the last part of the sermon, viz., the thought that Jesus' body is in the Sacrament of the Supper symbolically offered to us in the form of bread. That is to say, the teaching that man does not live by earthly bread alone, and the offer of the spiritual bread of righteousness to all who seek it, have been recast by the evangelist in the form, corresponding with the final mystery of the Christian revelation, that Jesus Himself is the bread which is broken for the life of the world. It is important, however, to keep the various ideas distinct. First, there is a Bread of Heaven. This bread the

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Galilean multitude does not understand. It cannot even *think* of heavenly bread except after the analogy of the Manna in the wilderness. It deliberately expects the Messiah to repeat the material miracle. Some morning they will wake up and find the ground strewn with literal manna! Nevertheless, Jesus in this wonder-seeking world of Galilee affirms that the *spiritual* instincts in mankind are the deepest. "Going ashore," says Mark, "He saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion for them, because they were as sheep without a shepherd, and He began to teach them many things" (Mark vi. 34). The mass movements of His time, with all their materialism, did not produce despair or pessimism in His mind; He felt the pathos of the situation, but He did not despair of the spiritual remedy. "Come unto Me," He said in face of the vast restlessness of the time, "and I will give you rest. Take My yoke on you, and learn of Me" (Matt. xi. 28-30).

Thus Jesus, establishing contact with the deeper yearnings of mankind, offers Himself, His word, His spiritual leadership, as the answer. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him, but just for this reason he needs shepherding. Masses of men in Jesus' time had broken with the established religious system, and there was nothing to take its place. Christ offers Himself as the way to God and peace. But, as we have seen, there is a still deeper

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sense in which He becomes the Bread of Heaven for the life of the world, and this is the subject of the remaining part of the sermon (vi. 51-59). The bread which the Son of Man gives for the life of the world is His flesh. By appropriating His flesh and His blood the believer obtains eternal life. He enters into saving fellowship with Christ, and through Him with the Father. One life proceeding from the Father and the Son sustains and quickens everlastingly all who enter into that mystical relation. The reference here can only be to the partaking of the Holy Supper, and we may compare Paul's words in 1 Cor. x. 16-17, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?" Apart from the solemn symbolism of the Supper, the words about eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man would be a startlingly strange and materialistic figure. Taken in connection with the eucharistic observance, they touch the deepest spiritual chords of the Christian nature.

Yet as if to guard against materialistic interpretations of the principle that Christ is offered in the Sacrament as the Bread of Life, the evangelist places after the sermon some further explanatory words of the Master (vi. 60-63). His disciples have confessed that the word in the sermon about eating the flesh of the Son of Man is "a hard saying." Jesus

makes answer " Does this prove a stumbling-block ? *How then if you should see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before ?* " What is the nature of the appeal here made by Jesus ? According to the natural sense of the words, Jesus is asking His disciples to place themselves at the point of view of a later time, when He has ascended to the Father, and to consider how, if even now while He is with them they are perplexed by, and put misconstruction upon His words about partaking of the flesh and blood of the Son of Man, they will possibly understand them at that later period. Yet it is to that later time that they must transfer themselves in thought, for in the very difficulty which they will *then* experience in putting a literalistic or material interpretation on their communion with Him lies the real solution of their present question. In other words, all materialistic conceptions of what it means to partake of His flesh and blood are to be set aside. It is not in a physical, but in a spiritual sense that Jesus is the source of heavenly life to His followers. " It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail : the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and life " (vi. 63). The essence of believing communion is a reasonable intercourse of spirit with spirit, mediated to the disciple through the life-giving word and mind of the Master. Such appropriation of Christ in the spirit brings life to the communicant, the rest is figure or symbol.

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So the evangelist, who throughout this chapter must have freely put together and recast materials derived from different strata in Jesus' teaching, explains the mystery of Christ as the Bread of Life. He will not dissociate this mystery from the Sacrament, but neither will he make the appropriation of Christ equivalent to the mere partaking of the sacramental elements. After all—though the evangelist does not use these words—it is a receiving of Christ as crucified that constitutes the act of communion. The sacrament had indeed from the start a reference to the future Messianic fellowship in the Kingdom. But, as St. Paul's words make clear, it was never dissociated from the death of Christ as Saviour (1 Cor. xi. 23f.). The influence of Greek mysticism may have assisted that later development of thought by which, both in Paul and in John, the rite is conceived as a means of communion with the living One, but it did not affect the nature of that communion. Materialistic interpretations of every kind are repelled. Fellowship with Christ is reasonable and spiritual. It is enacted within the sphere of Christ's words and Christ's spirit.

THE DIVISION AMONG THE DISCIPLES

The evangelist, who is here bringing to a close the first part of his work, explains that in consequence

of the above discourse a division took place among the disciples, and that many went back and "walked no more with Jesus." But when Jesus asked the Twelve if they too wished to go, Peter answered: "Lord, to whom shall we go away? Thou hast the words of everlasting life. And we have believed and come to know that Thou art God's Holy One." This is the Johannine counterpart to the Synoptic confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi (Mark viii. 29). It is indeed an interpretative paraphrase of Peter's original expression, but as such it presents perhaps the finest and most rounded statement of the grounds of Christian faith in the New Testament. Jesus is Lord. He has the words of everlasting life, the secret of blessedness here and the key of the world to come. Of all who have spoken to man He brings God and heavenly things nearest. Those who have heard Him and come under His influence can never think of any other Mediator with the Father: He alone in the experience of faith is God's Saint. Here then we have the basis on which the theology of the Fourth Gospel and of the Church rests. But if faith has come to a point in Peter's confession, the evangelist points out that unbelief was advancing to a crisis in the treasonable designs of Judas (vi. 64-71).

This division in the ranks of Jesus' followers corresponds with a sifting process which had been going on in Galilee. But the fact that the evangelist

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places it where he does is significant. Bringing it in at the close of the Capernaum discourse, he makes it clear that the criterion of faith and unbelief in the Christian Church is the relation to Christ which is expressed in the Sacrament. Only as men give the assent of their souls to that are they disciples in the true sense. Here again we are reminded that the final act of Jesus in the Upper Room before His death fixed for His Church the significance of His person. There was never any time when the Church thought of Jesus otherwise than as Priest, Mediator, and Atoning Sacrifice. Consequently the Supper and the relation to Christ expressed in it become the criterion of discipleship. The initial direction given to the faith of the first disciples in the words "Behold the Lamb of God" (i. 29, 36) verifies itself in experience.

CHAPTER V

Christ the Light of the World. His Apologia to Judaism. The Witness of Experience

(vii.-ix.)

PART II of the Gospel, which extends from Chap. vii. to Chap. xii., has for its subject the development of the issue between Jesus and Judaism down to the point where His death is resolved upon. The hostility of the Jews during this period takes on an ever darker and deadlier hue, while conversely the gift of God in Christ reveals itself increasingly in characters of Light (Chaps. vii.-ix.) and of Life (Chaps. x.-xii.). The fact that Christ is the Light finds concrete illustration in His restoration of sight to the man who was born blind (Chap. ix.); the fact that He is the Life finds corresponding expression in the raising of Lazarus (Chap. xi.). The one "sign" is appropriately associated with the Feast of Tabernacles; the other with the Feast of the Dedication: and with the latter sign, in which the divine

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manifestation made in Jesus culminates, the resolution of the Jews to put Him to death comes to a head.

The section with which we have immediately to deal revolves more or less round the Feast of Tabernacles (vii. 2, 10, 14, 37), and round the thought that Jesus is the Light of the World (viii. 12, ix. 5, 39). The angles from which the latter thought is contemplated are various, and we shall have to look more closely than usual for the sequence of ideas. The argument of the whole section may be presented briefly as follows. Jesus does not seek to be known openly, and accepts no personal credit for the truths which He teaches, nor does He even possess the outward marks of the Messiah whom the Jews had been taught to look for (Chap. vii.). Nevertheless His claim to be the Light of men is proved by His "judgements" which have the corroborative witness of the Father, and in particular, for such as have believed on Him from Judaism, it is verified by the new-found "freedom in the truth" and the new understanding of matters like Abrahamic descent, into which Christ has brought them (Chap. viii.). Finally, there are those whose life-long spiritual darkness He has taken away and whom no prejudice or persecution can convince that it is not the Son of God who has ushered them into His marvellous light (Chap. ix.). Over against such evidence the self-sufficiency of the Pharisees is darkness itself.

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THE GLORY OF CHRIST NOT EXTERNAL

Incidentally in Chapter vii. the evangelist touches at several points on the exterior relations of the work and teaching of Jesus, and we find a kind of unconscious approach to the elements of a simple Christian apologetic. Prejudice against the claim of Christ to speak with supreme authority of the things of God was not confined to His earthly days. The arguments levelled against Christianity in the evangelist's time repeated the prejudices formerly entertained in Jerusalem, and the same is true of the later anti-Christian diatribes of Jews like Trypho who debated with Justin Martyr at Ephesus, and of Greek philosophers like Celsus whose statements Origen answered. How could Christ's claim to be the Messiah of God defend itself against the obscurity of His birth and of His sphere, the unauthorised or, as the case might be, the unoriginal character of His teaching, the absence from His external history of anything dazzling or remarkable? Now it is important to notice that the answer of Christianity was to admit to the full these and all similar criticisms made from an external point of view, and yet to hold that what was revealed in Christ was the eternal truth of God. It shows the extent to which the Church had taken home the lesson of the Cross that with all the vast theological

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claims made for the Person of Jesus, there was no attempt to gloss over the facts of the earthly history, or to array Him in any kind of worldly pomp or splendour. On the contrary, in the "humiliation" of Christ His followers saw the supreme dignity (Phil. ii. 5-11). The glory of the light of God had nothing to do with *exterior* circumstance, but reveals itself just in what the natural man rejects.

Thus, in the first place, the fourth evangelist points out that Jesus did not court publicity, nor in any way seek to attract the world's notice. To His brethren's suggestion in Galilee that He should seek the wider audience of the pilgrim throngs at Jerusalem (in which there would be many foreign-born or "Hellenist" Jews), He answered that His right to speak for God did not depend on the publicity which He secured. In point of fact, as the evangelist so frequently notices, *it was only by His death that Jesus became a world-figure* (ii. 4; iii. 14; viii. 28; xii. 31-32, etc.). The only elevation which He sought and found was the elevation of His sacrifice (vii. 1-12).

Again, the right of Jesus to be heard by man does not depend on any newness or originality in His message. The doctrine is not His own, but that of the Father who has sent Him. Consequently the only proof of it is that which is given in *experience*, and which comes to the surrendered and obedient heart. "If any one has the desire to do God's will,

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he will realise whether the teaching is from God, or whether I speak from Myself" (vii. 14f.). The very glory of Jesus, as the evangelist interprets Him, lay in a surrender of Himself to the Father's will by which His teaching lost every characteristic that men might describe as novel or unusual, but acquired instead a universal and eternal validity. In virtue of this quality men can no longer hesitate as to Christ's origin or authority. For what is glory but the self-evidence of the Divine? And such self-evidence attaches to Christ's message in every man's conscience. Not novelty, but truth to all that man can think God really to be, is its recommendation. Here also we have a hint of the direction in which early Christianity looked for a true apologetic of the Saviour's claims (cp. 1 Cor. i. 18—ii. 16).

Again, the fact that Jesus is the world's Light does not depend on His possession of the marks which men had looked to see in Israel's Messiah. This chapter is full of the kind of criticism which was passed on Jesus in Jerusalem, and which was still current among Jews and others when the evangelist wrote. "He is a good man," say some; but others answer, "Nay, He misleads the people." "He speaks like a man inspired," continues the affirmative; but against this is the fact that "we know His origin." The "signs" wrought by Jesus lead many to say that "He is truly the Prophet," or "He is the

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Christ," but to this the reply is "Does Christ come out of Galilee?" The Pharisees are satisfied to argue that none of the official heads of the Jewish Church have given their support to the Nazarene, and that Christianity is simply a delusion of the populace. Nicodemus indeed may protest that the law ought to listen to a man before judging him, but Nicodemus is as good as a Galilean himself, though, as the Pharisees declare (vii. 52), if he had read his Bible, he would have known better. An interesting part of the criticism is the surmise of some that Jesus, when He speaks of going from them, means to go to the Jews of the Greek Dispersion. Does this reveal that in the opinion of the orthodox of Palestine the teaching of Jesus savoured of Hellenistic-Jewish liberalism? or that it found special favour in Hellenistic circles in Jerusalem? It may well be. Through all this criticism of the world, however, Jesus moved serene and undisturbed. His glory did not depend on human estimation, nor on the presence or absence of the ordinary "signs" of the Messiah. He has higher evidence.

Thus the glory which belongs to Christ as the Light of the World has nothing to do with external circumstances. This was a point of view which neither Jew nor Greek could understand. The one looked for the outward insignia of authority, the other for something daring, original and speculative in thought. But as against both the Christian

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Church has taken its stand by the Cross, and learned to look at things from that angle. One great lesson has been mastered, and it comes out in an entirely new conception of the glory of the Divine.

The little section of Chapter vii. which speaks of Christ's offer of Living Water may be reserved till we come to Chapter xvi. and its teaching regarding the Holy Spirit.

EPISODE—THE WOMAN ACCUSED BY THE PHARISEES

The incident with which Chapter viii. opens is not an original part of the Fourth Gospel. It is absent in the Sinaitic, Vatican, and other ancient Codices; and of Minuscule MSS. a few have it in another position, the Ferrar Group placing it after Luke xxi. 38, others inserting it at the close of John's Gospel, or after John vii. 36. All this shows that it has drifted to its present position from other moorings, though what its original location may have been, and how it got detached, cannot be determined. The narrative has greater affinities of style with the Synoptic than with the Johannine manner, and it is possible that, having been removed at an early period from one of the Synoptic writings and placed on the appendix after John, it later found its way in here because it seemed to illustrate the "judgments" of which Christ speaks in the

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section beginning at Chapter viii. 12. However that may be, there is no reason to doubt its genuineness as an authentic fragment of the evangelical tradition. The incident which it preserves is one of the most touching in gospel-story, and has a close parallel in Luke vii. 36-50.

Jesus is teaching one morning in the temple-courts when the Scribes and Pharisees appear, bringing with them a woman whom they have detected in sin. They place the condemned in the midst, and having rehearsed the circumstances propound their question. Moses in the Law prescribes capital punishment by stoning in such cases, but what does Jesus say? Obviously the motive of the inquisitors is to discover whether Jesus will forgive this sinner as He has forgiven others, and so to involve Him before witnesses in some declaration or act subversive of the authority of the Mosaic legislation. But if they stretched the net wide for this purpose they were destined to be greatly disappointed by Jesus' answer. Jesus does not feel it to be necessary to face the legal issue. There were prior considerations to be faced by His questioners before they would even be free to make a legal question of it. There was the shame of that poor woman standing there in public with all these men around her. Jesus stooped down, and with His finger began writing on the ground. There is no need to attach to this act any kind of mysterious

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significance. Christ was not thinking of what He was writing, but hiding His face from the moral insincerity of the scene which was being enacted before Him. How could these men in that situation get away from the tribunal of their own conscience ? If, and when that court cleared them, would they have power left to invoke the arm of the law against that woman ? Raising His head, Jesus said, as they still demanded an answer, " Let the one among you who is without sin first cast a stone at her." That is to say, He formally admits the legality of the procedure required by the Mosaic code, but *makes its application a moral question for the administrators*. This is the highest manner of upholding it. Then, bending His head again, He continued writing till they all slipped out one by one, and He and the woman were left alone. " Woman," he said, " where are they ? Did no one condemn you ? " When she replied, " No one, sir," He said, " Neither do I condemn you ; go, and henceforth sin no more " (viii. 1-11).

In Jewish legalism, where men professed to order life by the will of God, it escaped notice that the God whose law prescribed death for the guilty had said also through His prophets : " As I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live ; turn you, turn from your evil ways, for why will you die, House of Israel ? " (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). The whole

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redemptive side of God's revelation was overlooked in a stringent but quite false insistence on His justice. But what kind of zeal for justice was it that, stressing the letter of God's judgment against offenders sometimes more sinned against than sinning, left unscrutinised and unjudged in the executioners sins that were often graver simply because the letter of the law could not keep pace with the fertility of evil in hearts that should have been good ? Can a law justly be applied to others that is not honoured in spirit by ourselves ? Jesus does not regard it as sincere on the part of these Pharisees to appeal to the legal aspects of the case. It means that they leap over that whole foreground of personal moral life where God meets the soul of man, and where His first and great commandments are delivered. In fact, Jesus is here giving the same inward interpretation to the Mosaic law as He does in the Sermon on the Mount in Matt. v. 17-48. He is bringing the same personal considerations to bear on the men before Him. But there is something more which His inquisitors have totally overlooked, and that is God's relation to the sinner. This, though expressed in law, finds a still higher expression in grace, and it is as the organ and representative of that grace that Jesus here acts : He sets the Gospel in place of the Law.

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CHRIST IS THE WITNESS TO HIMSELF. HIS APOLOGIA TO JUDAISM

With the twelfth verse of the eighth chapter the proof of the thesis that Christ is the world's Light becomes direct. It is grounded on the plea advanced by Jesus that the believer in Him will not find himself walking in darkness, but will have the light of life (viii. 12). That is, he will have inward evidence of Divine and eternal things. Christian experience will be to him a path of shining light, shining more and more to the perfect day. The Pharisees object that all this has to be taken on the mere *testamur* of Jesus. The answer is that, even so, Christ's *testamur* is proved by His consciousness of a supernatural origin and destiny, a fact into the grounds of which His critics cannot penetrate (viii. 13-14). Thus, in the last analysis, the central truth of Christianity turns on the self-attestation of Jesus : the latter is not a debatable matter but a datum. But it would be wrong to suppose, nevertheless, that the truth of Christ's witness lacks the clear corroboration of experience. It is proved by the character of His "judgments" which in their righteousness bear the stamp of the Divine. "*I am the witness concerning myself*" : this certainly is the ultimate and sufficient ground of faith, but men will do well not to forget that this claim of Jesus is endorsed in every particle by the Father, who also

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“witnesses to Me” (viii. 15-18). The Pharisees turn the edge of this appeal with the jest “Where is your father?” but Christ answers that their rejection of Himself goes hand in hand with a persistent blindness to God.

It is clear—and it will become clearer as we proceed—that the arguments handled in this chapter state on the one hand the stock-representations of Judaism against Jesus of Nazareth, and on the other hand the Christian answer. The final stand of Christianity is made on the irrefragable position that Jesus is His own evidence, the True Witness concerning Himself. To desert this ground is to abandon Christianity. Nevertheless, Christ has also the evidence of God, for to know Him is to know the Father. This is matter of experience. He who has surrendered to Christ has no doubt whatsoever that by the same token he is yielding to God.

At verse 21 the argument is continued by the statement that Jesus goes, and the Jews, left without Him, will die in their sins. They affect to make a mystery of His going, but the plain truth is that they are “from below,” their thoughts, policies and aims are of this world, while He is “from above.” If they die in sin it will be the result of unbelief, and unbelief in what? Here we come to the very heart of the doctrine of the Person of Christ as set forth by the fourth evangelist. “If you do not

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believe that I AM, you shall die in your sins" (viii. 21-24). It is possible after the words "I am" to supply mentally the predicate *Messiah* or something else indicative of the form under which Jesus was historically manifested, but the evangelist by not defining the claim leaves it open to us to supply a higher predicate. The Christ whose ascension to the Father closes the door of hope to the unbelieving Jews is by the very words "I AM" (cp. Exod. iii. 14; Isa. xli. 4; xliii. 10, 25) merged in the being of God. He belongs to the sphere of the Godhead, and as such speaks to men the final truth. Not that this divine relation excludes the reality of His human function as messenger of God, or overlooks the distinction of the Father and the Son, or is not compatible with Jesus' place in history, or with His dying on the Cross. Indeed, none of these historical facts is seen in its full significance until we view it against the background of the truth which has now risen above the horizon. But whereas in virtue of this divine nature which belongs to Him, Jesus might cut short the whole argument with the Jews by saying "Why should I speak to you at all?" nevertheless, as a messenger of God, behind whom stands He that is holy and true, He must go on speaking, and speaking to *the world*. This is the true destination of His message: though the Jews prove refractory, He must still go on witnessing, even if it be over the heads of His

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immediate auditors to the wider circle of the world. The nations and generations stand before Him, and for their sakes He does not even need to be understood by the Jews (viii. 25-27). His Cross at last will reveal the truth to the Jews, and show that nothing that He did or said was done or said without the Father ; " When you lift up the Son of Man, then will you know that I AM." The light which the Spirit will in that day flash on Him will show the whole truth. On earth Jesus may seem to stand alone before an unbelieving world, most of all when lifted on the Cross, but it is not really so. The Father has not left Him alone, but approves His every act (viii. 28). Is the evangelist here working in an indirect answer to any misunderstandings which the death of Jesus on the Cross, and particularly His cry " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? " as reported in the Synoptic tradition (Mark xv. 34 ; Matt. xxvii. 46) had created in some quarters ? It is possible.

It is now perfectly clear on what ultimate ground the doctrine of Christ in the Fourth Gospel rests. The " I AM " of God covers the Person of Christ, and all that was said in the Prologue about Christ is borne out by His teaching. Yet Christ, as God's Messenger in time, must plead with men, and *if the Jews will not listen, He must lift the range of His words till they reach the world.* The proof of His claims will be delivered by His Cross.

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The evangelist remarks that at this point in the argument many Jews believed on Christ. The next words, therefore, are addressed to those believing Jews, and take the form of the assurance: "If you continue in My word, you will truly be My disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free" (viii. 30-32). This hints that there is a danger of those *Jewish* Christians relapsing; but if they hold their ground in Christ's word, the truth, i.e., the reality of the new revelation of God made in Christ, will be their possession, and will ensure them against going back into a servitude which, as the context here makes plain, is a servitude to sin. In fact, what is here said is the exact equivalent of St. Paul's statement: "The law of the Spirit, that is, of the life which is in Christ Jesus, has made me free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. viii. 2). The discussion in John traverses more shortly the same ground as Paul traversed in his controversy with the Judaists. And as there, so here. The implication that the Jews are in bondage rouses the ire of the legal children of Abraham. It is difficult to decide how the next verses (viii. 33f.) are to be taken. If we understand Jesus to be still speaking to the believing Jews, the words will mean that these same believing Jews take umbrage at the first mention of their past servitude, and retire on to the proud ground of their Abrahamic descent. In other words, we have a hint or anticipation of the

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special weakness of the Jewish-Christian Church. But it may be, though the evangelist does not make the point clear, that it is the general body of the Jews, not the Christian minority, who voice the objection made in verses 33f.; the word of Jesus to the *believing* Jews being confined to verses 31-32. In that case, the argument is the same as in Rom. vi. 16-22. The Jews are the slaves of sin, and as slaves their tenure in the "house," i.e., their theocratic privilege under the former dispensation, is temporary: only the Son of God can free them by raising them to the full status of sons of the Father (cp. Chap. ii. p. 66). As it is, how can they claim to be children of Abraham in view of the hatred of Christ which is in their hearts? Abraham would not have approved such hatred. But Abraham is not the father of the Jews, and still less is God, for had they loved God they would have loved Christ, His divinely attested messenger. The father of the Jews is the devil, who was a homicide from the beginning—this a reference to the Fall, or to the murder of Abel by Cain—and as he never stood within the sphere of the truth, no more have they who calumniate, and refuse to listen to a Christ whom yet they can convict of no sin. They accuse Him of having a "demon" or of being a Samaritan, which to them is the same thing. What a loss! "Truly, truly, I tell you, whosoever lays to heart My word, shall not see death for ever" (viii. 33-51).

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Abraham and the prophets belonged to time, and passed away. When Christ, on the other hand, offers the gift of eternal life, He is speaking as a mightier than Abraham. Nay, Abraham, looking forward, saw Christ's day and rejoiced, for Christ was his "seed." But while Abraham belonged to time, Christ belongs to eternity. He existed eternally before Abraham was (viii. 52-59).

Such is the Apologia of Christ to Judaism as interpreted to us by the Fourth Evangelist. And if anywhere in the Gospel early Christian history and theological belief have blended with the tradition of Jesus' words to produce a statement satisfying to the profounder minds of the Church, it is in this passage. The evangelist cannot in this or in other discourses be thought of as a reporter of the words of Jesus. He is His *interpreter*, who lays before his readers the eternal import and bearing of Jesus' teaching as revealed to the Church by the Spirit, in other words by spiritual history and experience. For, in the first place, the issue between Christ and Judaism as presented here was not apprehended in this developed form until with St. Paul and others of the apostles Christianity outgrew its first local or Jewish phase, and became a mission to the world; and, secondly, the doctrine of Christ's Person, on which the Apologia is based, presupposes a more advanced stage of spiritual reflection than belongs to the original tradition of Jesus' words, as mirrored

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in the Synoptic Gospels. With regard to the first point, indeed, it may rightly be claimed that nothing that is said in John is not present in *germ* or in principle in the Synoptic declarations of Jesus on the subject of the Jewish nation, e.g. Matt. viii. 11-12 (=Luke xiii. 28-29), Matt. xxiii. 37-39 (=Luke xiii. 34-35), Mark xii. 1-12. But with regard to the other point, unless we assume that Jesus in public argument spoke *in extenso* of His own mystical relation to the Father, we are shut up to the conclusion that what the evangelist consciously gives us under the form of discourse by Christ is sometimes drawn, not from notes or traditions of His words, but from the results of theological reflection upon the significance of the Person of Christ as revealed to the Church through the Spirit. Such a procedure, in a Gospel intended to supplement the Synoptics both historically and theologically, was to the evangelist as legitimate as it was necessary. He believed that the Spirit took the things of Christ and showed them to the Church. There was no necessity, therefore, to follow a fixed tradition of recorded words in all that he makes Christ say. The Spirit supplemented the tradition, and the evangelist did not hesitate to follow its imparted guidance.

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THE WITNESS OF EXPERIENCE. BLIND EYES OPENED

The evidence that Christ is the world's Light concludes with an appeal to experience (ix. 1-41). There are those whose eyes Christ has opened, and whom no prejudice or contradiction can convince that it is not the Son of God who has translated them out of darkness into His marvellous light. This fact is presented in concrete form by aid of a symbolic incident. Jesus, passing from the scene of the above Apologia in Jerusalem, gives eyesight to a man congenitally blind. There can be no doubt that the man is to be regarded as the representative of those members of the Jewish nation to whom Christ has given a new vision of God, and for whom through this new vision all things have become new. Prefaced to the incident is a brief discussion of the meaning of suffering, which serves to throw into higher relief Christ's function of giving light to the blind. The disciples have asked, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" The popular Jewish view, maintained in spite of Ezekiel, was that such sufferers paid the penalty of parental offences. Greek readers of the Gospel, on the other hand, would possibly recall the Platonic maxim that suffering is retribution for personal wrongdoing committed in a previous life. The answer of Jesus sets aside both views as equally

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inadequate and equally short of the purpose served by the mystery in question. The purpose is "that the works of God may be illustrated" in the person of the sufferer. In other words, suffering is a direct call to action on Jesus' part, and on the part of all who like Him would do the will of God (ix. 1-4). We find the same thought later expressed with regard to Lazarus (xi. 4).

It is obvious that what we have here is in no sense a theoretical solution of the problem of suffering. No explanation is offered of the cause; attention is confined entirely to the *end* or ultimate purpose which the mystery serves. This is in accordance with the religious attitude which, bending the head reverently before the facts of life, asks not how physical evil has come to be—that is left to God—but how we are to deal with it. Nor is any other egress from the difficulty open to serious minds. It would be no gospel which by *explaining* things reconciled us to them, or left them as they were. Jesus' attitude is the very opposite. "We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day. Night comes—when no man can work" (ix. 4. Cp. v. 17). Suffering calls for action in the name of the loving God, for nothing answers our questions which does not at the same time assist the work of man's redemption. While no final explanation of suffering is offered, it is of vast importance that Jesus negatives the shallow

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and short-sighted theories which His disciples have unthinkingly suggested, for these not only do not amount to a real solution of the difficulty, but they misrepresent the real character of the Father in Heaven, originating as they do in a short-circuiting of thought which always disappoints. We must clear away from our thoughts of God all that seems to reconcile Him to remediable suffering or deprivation on the part of His creatures. Indirectly the passage provides illustration of what is meant by Christ being the Light of the World. *The light which He gives is not that of theory, but that of practical example.* He does not explain all mysteries but He supplies the guiding light of action.

That the whole incident is to be spiritually interpreted is plain not only by Christ's reason for healing the blind man as given in the words "While I am in the world, I am the world's light," but by the nature of the subsequent controversy between the man and the Jewish authorities (ix. 5-41). It is probable that in the injunction to the man to wash in the Pool of Siloam (ix. 7) the evangelist sees a reference to Christian baptism. But the clearest proof of the symbolic character with which the opening of the man's eyes is invested is the defence which the man is called to make before the orthodox Jews. Here before them, confessing Christ, is a man about whom there can be no manner of doubt that he was once

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blind and destitute. No number of queries regarding the *manner* in which he obtained his sight—the anointing with clay, the bath in the Pool of Siloam, etc.—can alter the fact that he now sees. Not even the fact that Jesus has violated the Sabbath law, a consideration which the Pharisees feel keenly, can resist a logic which declares that a “sinner” could never do what has been done for this particular man. As we listen to the trial, it becomes transparent that the man in the witness-box stands for the whole class of Jewish Christians to whom Christ has given inward sight. The first confession of such a disciple, the first discovery to which he is brought, is that Jesus is a Prophet (ix. 17. Cp. Chap. III. p. 101). Afterwards the same man is able to express himself in terms of a still higher revelation (ix. 35-37). But the immediate weight of his case is in the unalterable conviction “Once I was blind and now I see.” His contact with Christ, and His baptism, have opened to him the spiritual world. “Old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.” For the Jewish authorities to pretend to such a man that his Saviour is a “sinner” is a contradiction of all reason and experience. “Here is the unreason, that you do not know where He comes from”—i.e., you think Him an adventurer—“and He has opened my eyes” (ix. 30). He on his part can come no nearer to them than his experience will permit, and they

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on theirs can come no nearer to him than their *a priori* theory regarding Moses seems to sanction. To orthodox minds it is axiomatic that "God spoke to Moses," for the Bible says so, but what similar guarantees have they in the case of Jesus? The confessor's reply is "He has opened my eyes. We know that God does not hear sinners. . . . If He were not from God, He could have done nothing." In this deadlock nothing remains for the authorities but to excommunicate the man from the Synagogue and from all part in Judaism. Here we have in epitome the history of the Jewish *Minim*, those members of the favoured race who, having found in Christ the Light of Life, have thrown in their lot with Him, and had their names cast out as evil for the Son of Man's sake. But Wisdom is justified of these "children." The existence of confessors like this is the final and unanswerable proof that Christ is the Light of the World.

One step, however, still remains. Christ not only opens to such confessors the spiritual world, but reveals the secret of His own Person and of His final glory. Finding the excommunicate in the temple, and looking into his opened eyes, Jesus asks "Dost thou believe on the Son of Man?"¹ What is the meaning of this question? It might seem that any further expression of faith on the part of the

¹ So the best Greek Uncials and the Sinaitic Syriac. A L and the old Latin VSS read "Son of God."

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man would be superfluous. He has not only confessed Christ, but been counted worthy to suffer for His sake. Yet something more is needed. He has confessed Christ as a Prophet. He has defended His holy character and irreproachable name. But something more intimate and personal is needed to make the full confessor of Christ. He must see his Saviour on the throne of His glory, crowned with dominion and ruling over all. For this is the import of faith in the *Son of Man*. The title connects Christ with the glorious vision of Dan. vii. 13. It proclaims Him King of Kings and Lord of Lords. And to see Him thus is the final vision of faith. This therefore is the stage to which the confessor of the present chapter is now brought by revelation of the Lord Himself. He sees in his Saviour the One to whom God has given the name that is above every name, and he worships. That faith is faith only as it rises to this height, and becomes fully and personally aware of its object, appears by the closing word of Christ which now follows: "To obtain a verdict did I come into the world, that the blind might see, and the seeing become blind." The Pharisees perceive the point of the word, and tauntingly ask "And are we blind?" The reply is in effect *Dixistis*. Had they confessed that they were blind and poor, there might have been hope for them; but their claim to see affixes their guilt indelibly. Being satisfied, they renounce the only

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chance of beholding the higher world. Does not the same peril still exist

“Lest eyes that never saw Thee face to face
Should miss Thy heavenly reign ? ”

Such is the final proof that Christ is the Light of the World. The succession of those who, like Paul on the Damascus day, though perhaps by a gentler process, have had the eyes of their understanding opened to God, to sin and righteousness, to life and blessedness, to the final purpose of things, has carried forward the power and demonstration of Christianity. To such confessors no other name can compare with the name of Christ. He is Prophet, Holy One of God, King of Kings. The verdict rests on experience (ix. 35-41).

CHAPTER VI

Christ the Giver of Life. Allegories of the Door of the Sheep and of the Good Shepherd. The Raising of Lazarus

It is somewhat difficult to decide how the first twenty-one verses of Chapter x. are to be taken, whether as continuation and sequel of Chapter ix. which they follow without any break, or as introduction and preface to a new section centering round the thought of Christ as the Author and Giver of Life. There are reasons for inclining both ways. The thought that Christ is the Door of the Sheep, and the Shepherd who gives His life for the flock, would be appropriate as an address to the excommunicate of ix. 35-41 ; indeed, certain of the verses, viz., 19-21, refer directly to his case. For these reasons x. 1-21 might properly be assigned to the preceding section. But as, on the other hand, the thought of Christ as the Giver of Life is already present in them, it is impossible to separate them entirely from the section which follows, and therefore it will be best to regard the passage as transitional, as forming the bridge between the

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teaching which gathers round Tabernacles and the new teaching which centres round the Feast of Dedication (x. 22). This gives an appropriate setting to the allegories with which Chapter x. opens. Jesus, still looking into the eyes of the blind man to whom He has given sight, but whom the Pharisees have driven from the Synagogue, explains who it is alone who has the power to open and shut the gates of life.

CHRIST THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP

The thought that God's elect are His flock, graciously tended and led by the Divine Hand, occupies a central place in the Old Testament religion. It finds touching expression in the most familiar of all Psalms, where the utter dependence of a lamb of the flock on the shepherd serves as analogy to the believer's relation to Jehovah. God feeds His dependent ones, leads them by green pastures and still waters, conducts them by straight paths to ever new sources of life, gives them strength and confidence in the dark valley of mortal fear. The same conception reappears in the message of redemption with which Deutero-Isaiah opens. The prophet comforts the exiled nation with the assurance that God is about to visit His people, and to be revealed to their eyes. But the question

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arises, "If He so comes, in what fashion will He be seen?" The answer is "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm," etc. (Isa. xl. 1-11). In the present passage this conception is appropriated for Christ, in whom God's promise to be the Shepherd of His elect is historically fulfilled. Christ is the supreme Pastor of Souls, who came that men might have the more abundant life.

But the allegory of the Shepherd is prefaced by the allegory of the Door of the Fold. There is a door to the fold which constitutes the only legitimate approach from without to the sheep. The shepherd of the sheep chooses this entrance because he is the shepherd, and because the warden of the gate naturally opens to him. On the other hand, thieves and robbers avoid the gate, and climb in from elsewhere. The sheep in the fold know the genuine pastor's voice. He shows himself by his individual knowledge of them, and by his defensive attitude when they go out to pasture. He is not a driver, but a leader, and the sheep have confidence in his guidance. On the other hand, the deceiver has none of these signs, and the sheep by instinct avoid him (x. 1-5).

It is already apparent that what we have here is not a parable but an allegory. In other words, what is before the mind is not an actual fold, but the society of God's elect. This appears by the

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mention of a gate-warden by the side of the shepherd. No ordinary sheepfold would have such a duplication of offices. The same fact of an allegorical intention is plain in the statement that when the shepherd puts his sheep to pasture, he goes in front. This custom is by no means invariable in the East, and if here it is asserted as the rule, that is because the thing contemplated is the *spiritual* pastorate, or cure of souls. In fact we have here an allegory of the Church of Jesus. Jesus is the Door of the Sheep (x. 6-10) in the sense that through Him the genuine pastor of souls enters upon his work for and among the sheep. Those who have come before Christ—this is a clear reference to the Pharisaic usurpation of spiritual authority as illustrated in Chapter ix.—have been despoilers of men's souls, and the elect have turned from them. But Christ has opened the door of life to the sheep, and through Him there has come to be a genuine pastorate of souls. The mark of the true pastor is that he enters on his work through *Christ*.

Obviously the allegory is directed against the false claims of Judaism, and its unofficial ministry of Pharisees and scribes. The latter have claimed the power of the keys, to open and shut the gates of life; and in the exercise of this power they have excommunicated the poor confessor of Chapter ix. But it is a usurped power, and they have employed it to inhibit men's souls, and to exclude them from

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the life that might be theirs. Because one poor man, who was once blind, has had the courage to think differently from the Pharisees, and to confess his Saviour's name, they have erased his name from the book of life. But Christ alone has the power to open and shut, and He has commissioned a lawful ministry. The most terrible indictment of a false ministry ever uttered, and at the same time the best commentary on the Johannine allegory of the Door, is Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisees in Matthew xxiii. The scribes and Pharisees have taken their seat in Moses' chair. Their words are good and to be commended, but their actions form a bad example. They make up heavy burdens to lay on others' shoulders, but, so far from taking a hand with these burdens themselves, they do not touch them with a finger. Arrogating titles and honours, they have shut the Kingdom in men's faces, neither entering in themselves nor allowing others to enter. All this indicates a system in which the binding of the Law on others occupies the area which the love of it for its own sake should have filled. All the energies of life are devoted to the maintenance of commandments which are not loved or honoured by the ministers, but which are nevertheless insisted on because salutary for the people. Such ministers are the thieves and robbers of men's souls.

It is quite another picture which arises before us in the Johannine allegory. We see the Christian

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Church and the new Christian pastorate of souls. Christ has provided for His own a real spiritual tuition and guardianship. His ministers come to His chosen ones by the way of Himself. The flock knows the truth of the teaching which they give, because it discerns in them the voice of the one Shepherd. They do not drive the flock like the Pharisees, but going before it in the way of example "allure to brighter worlds." Their actions are all through Christ the Crucified, who is the chief Shepherd of the Sheep.

CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The allegory of the Door is followed by the allegory of the Good Shepherd. Philo Judæus calls the Logos the "shepherd of souls," but it is not on Philo, but on Christ's own teaching and example that the Johannine allegory rests. "What man of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one, does not leave the ninety-nine on the steppe, and go after the lost one until he finds it?" (Luke xv. 3-4). This parable is used in Luke to justify the attitude of Jesus to sinners. All social and religious barriers were thrust aside by Him in the task of restoring the souls of the lost to God. In Matthew the same parable is applied to the necessity of dealing tenderly in the Church with the souls of weak and erring brethren (Matt. xviii. 12-18). Not until

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every other means of bringing the offenders to reason has been exhausted, must the Christian society resort to excommunication. Doubtless in the original teaching of Jesus the parable was urged in both of these relations, both with regard to sinners who have never known the love of God, and with regard to believers who have lapsed from it. In John we have the final interpretation of the parable. Christ is the Good Shepherd, the Supreme Pastor of Souls. His desire is that men may have life, and life in overflowing measure. For their sakes He lays down His own life, in this showing the contrast between Himself and "hirelings" who at the approach of the wolf desert the flock incontinently, and leave it to be ravaged and scattered. Christ's love also is universal in its scope. He has sheep which are not of the Jewish fold, and out of the two gatherings, from Israel and from the Gentile world, He will make one flock under one Shepherd. The central thought round which everything else turns is that Christ manifests His Pastorate by the free surrender of His life (x. 10-21).

That here again we have allegory rather than parable appears by the trait of the Shepherd's death. No obligation to die for the sheep lies on the ordinary flockmaster, but, on the other hand, the dying of Christ for His elect is the keystone in the arch of His redeeming work. And this obligation to die is no external necessity, but one constituted by the very

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nature of His love. Here we find a new ray of light on the mystery of the Cross. Christ dies through fidelity to His pastoral commitments with regard to the souls of men. He has identified Himself with the redemption of men, and for their sakes, to save them from the enemy of souls, He parts with life itself. This is not theology alone, but history. In the Synoptic Gospels the thing which first draws on Jesus the hatred of the Jewish authorities is His advocacy of the rights of the "lost" and the outcast to a share in God's Kingdom. In His passion to restore the lost to God He set at naught the artificial barriers created by legalism, and it was for the sake of the same reconciliation that as Messiah He called for an understanding finally with the authorities in Jerusalem. His friends in that hour were the multitude of the common people (Mark xi. 8f., xi. 18, xii. 12, xii. 38f., xiv. 2). It was they who sang the Hosanna as He entered the Holy City, who heard His teaching gladly, and who formed the supreme, and for a time the successful, obstacle to the designs of the Sanhedrin. Finally it was for them, the "many," that at the Institution of the Supper He was conscious of giving His life in sacrifice. The Johannine allegory is thus a commentary on the Messianic history. The Shepherd dies that the sheep may be saved, and He is raised that they may have life more abundant.

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The interpretation of the allegory is given in words which Jesus speaks at the Festival of the Dedication which had now come on (x. 22). This festival, the Chanukhah, commemorated the restoration of the temple-worship by Judas Maccabæus on the 25th of Chisleu (December), B.C. 165 (1 Macc. iv. 52-59; 2 Macc. i. 18, x. 5f.). But along with the restoration of ordinances it commemorated the martyrs who fell in the Syrian persecution, and thus might in a sense be regarded as a Festival of the Resurrection. The last fact gives special point to the words which Christ here speaks (x. 25-30). Christ gives His sheep eternal life, "and they shall not perish for ever, and no one shall pluck them from My hand." This then is the supreme service of the Shepherd to His own. Those false shepherds, the Pharisees, erase from the book of life the names of Jesus' followers, but no one can exclude them from the actual gift of life, for they are in Jesus' hand. The words not only contain the certainty of eternal life for Jesus' followers, but expose the needlessness of the fear that in judging for themselves, and acknowledging the Divine where they have found it, i.e., in Christ, such should fall away from God. They cannot fall from God, for they are *gripped*. In their persuasion of faith the Eternal has laid hold of them, and they have laid hold of the Eternal. It is alleged against them that, being loosed from the Law, these confessors in Christ

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will drift into licence. The answer is that those who are in Christ's hand will never perish, because they are God's gift to His Son. Being in Christ's hand, they are in the Father's keeping, since Christ and the Father are one. The last words contain perhaps the compactest expression of the whole Johannine theology. Formally, they do not assert more than the existence of a perfect harmony of will between the Son and the Father. But in substance they imply the same metaphysical relation as the opening verses of the Prologue, and the I AM of the Apologia in Chapter viii.

Thus the Christian answer to the Jewish contention that the followers of Jesus are schismatics and excommunicates from the household of God takes the form of withdrawing from Judaism its claim to possess any longer a rightful ministry. The charge of God's elect has passed to Jesus Christ, the Shepherd whom God has brought from the dead. And over that freedom of thought which marks Christianity as opposed to Judaism the mantle of the Divine protection is flung. For Jews to confess Christ was equivalent to cutting themselves loose from traditional authority, and acknowledging the Divine on the basis of immediate experience. Christ therefore touched Judaism only on its *liberal* side. The enemy was traditionalism. Wherever there was a willingness to accept as Divine that which approved itself as such to heart

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and conscience, Jesus received a hearing and a following. But in this direct response to the movement of the Spirit of God lay the strength of the new religion. The confessors of Jesus felt themselves gripped and held as by the very hand of God. The whole chapter is a defence of *spiritual freedom* (x. 26-30).

Into the question propounded by the Jews in verses 22-26 we need not go at this point because it does not affect the argument. But it is necessary to glance for a moment at the other remaining passage of the chapter, viz., verses 31-39. The charge against Jesus from the Jewish side is ultimately that of blasphemy. In desiring to stone Him they are moved not by disapproval of His actions, but by the fact that "being man, He makes Himself God" (x. 33). In so formulating the indictment the Fourth Gospel goes beyond the Synoptics, where the "blasphemy" of Jesus consists in His having to the High Priest's question "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" answered "I am, and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark xiv. 61-64). In the Fourth Gospel the claims of Jesus are interpreted from a later point in the controversy. The Jews regard Jesus as infringing the monotheism of the Old Testament. From the Christian standpoint, however, this accusation is resisted. The Old

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Testament contains such statements as that in Psalm lxxxii., "I said, You are *elohim*." Thus arises the Christian argument: If Scripture, which cannot be broken, gives the name "*elohim*" to men to whom the Word of God came, is it reasonable to accuse of blasphemy Him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, because He said "I am God's Son"? (x. 34-36). Though the argument is ascribed to Jesus, its true origin is to be sought in the Christian apologetic of the evangelist's world and time. Whether "*elohim*" in Psalm lxxxii. means "man in the state in which he was created," as Jewish expositors explained, or "those to whom the word of God came," as the evangelist states (cp. Exod. xxii. 8; Deut. i. 17; xix. 17), the term is a hyperbolism, and the argument would not carry conviction outside of Jewish circles. The Christian doctrine of the Person of Christ is independent of such argumentation, resting as it does on a sufficient basis of Christian experience.

The closing words of Chap. x. state that Jesus now withdrew from Jerusalem, and remained for a period beyond the Jordan, near the field of John's earlier labours. This period of work will correspond with the so-called Perean ministry of Luke's Gospel (Luke ix. 51-xviii. 14). The evangelist states that a large concourse of followers came to Jesus at this time confessing that, though John had wrought no

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"signs," all that he had said of Christ was true. By these words he writes *Finis* to his great argument that John "existed merely for the sake of Jesus."

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS. CHRIST THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

The allegory of the Good Shepherd who gives eternal life to His own is appropriately followed by the Raising of Lazarus (xi. 1-44), which as illustrating the principle that Christ is the Resurrection and the Life has the same kind of typical or symbolic significance as the Opening of the Eyes of the Blind Man in Chap. ix. Both incidents in fact are sacramental in the sense of being outward signs or seals of spiritual realities. As events in the physical world they are isolated and abnormal ; they do not permit of inferences being drawn from them with regard to the natural order of things in the Christian world. But the spiritual principles, which for the moment find expression in and through them, are normal and constant. Jesus did not come to restore sight literally to all blind eyes, or to raise literally from the grave all men who have died, but in the two incidents under consideration may be seen the special manifestation of an eternal will to open the inward eyes of men, and to raise their souls from the grave of sin. So at any rate the evangelist represents them.

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In his eyes they have a sort of sacramental significance.

Some of the critical questions to which the Lazarus narrative gives rise have been briefly considered in the opening chapter (pp. 32-34). It was there shown that the evangelist cannot be thought to be presenting us with a pure and simple allegory. He has founded on the tradition of an incident in which as through a transparent medium he sees the resurrection of believers in Christ foreshadowed. No doubt he has elaborated the incident in the interests of the spiritual lesson, but nothing justifies the assumption that in this he was working with materials which he did not believe to be historical. The critical difficulties to which the Lazarus-episode gives rise concern really the earlier history of the tradition—though to judge by the circumstantial character of the narrative, it can scarcely be thought that the tradition developed to its present form on any other basis than that of some clearly featured incident in Jesus' ministry.

Our task here is to form some estimate of the spiritual values with which the incident is invested in the mind of the evangelist.

While Jesus is beyond the Jordan, a message reaches him from the Bethany sisters, Mary and Martha, that their brother Lazarus whom Jesus loved is sick. The evangelist is here working with materials not known to the Synoptists, for Mark

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and Matthew who record the anointing of Jesus by a woman in the house of Simon at Bethany do not give her name (Mark xiv. 3f., Matt. xxvi. 6f.), and Luke who names two women, Martha and Mary, as having once welcomed Jesus to their house does not connect them with Bethany (Luke x. 38f.), while none of the Synoptists mentions Lazarus. On receipt of the tidings Jesus merely says "This sickness is not to end in death, but serves the purpose of God's glory, that the Son of God may be glorified by it," and remains two days longer at the scene of His present labours. At this point, as if to obviate any possible misunderstanding of this inaction, the evangelist inserts parenthetically the statement that Jesus held the afflicted household in affection. Why then did He delay? Apparently the evangelist would have our minds travel along the road marked out by this question. He makes it plain that Jesus knows everything. He knows all that is happening in Bethany. His words about Lazarus' sickness cannot therefore mean that the sufferer will not die in the ordinary sense. On the other hand the evangelist lends no colour to the popular fancy that Christ meant to test the faith of the sisters. Accordingly, if reflection ought to seek any other motive than the final intention of Christ to proclaim Himself as the Resurrection and the Life, it should find it rather in the present exigencies of His work in Perea. Jesus was occupied

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with a pressing task, and until that was finished, He knew that God's hour for Him to go had not yet struck.

Certainly the evangelist's interpretation of the delay turns ultimately on the Saviour's intention to do a greater thing at Bethany than simply to restore a sick man to health. The glory which the Son of God is to receive at Bethany connects, in accordance with the usual Johannine use of language, with His *death*, of which the raising of Lazarus is to be the proximate cause. A special interest belongs in this connection to the passage beginning at the seventh verse, where Jesus at length announces His intention to proceed to Judæa. The disciples recoil at this intimation of purpose because the Jews had recently planned to stone Him. Jesus' answer is "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" Expressed in this positive form, the words can only refer to the amplitude of the time which God allows for the accomplishment of His purpose whether in Perea or at Bethany; but to this thought there inevitably attaches itself in the present context the further assurance that, as long as the allotted period continues, God's servant need fear no evil. The Jews may threaten and take up stones, but while the work appointed by God remains to be done, the enemy is impotent. The only thing to be dreaded is that the night should fall before the day's work is done. Jesus is here expressing in another form the thought underlying His answer to the Pharisees

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who on a certain occasion tried to use the hostility of Antipas as a lever for getting rid of Him in Galilee (Luke xiii. 31-33). Jesus on that occasion bade the Pharisees take back to Antipas the answer : " See, I am casting out demons and working cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I bring my work to completion. But I have to keep moving to-day, to-morrow and the day after, because it is not possible for a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem." Jesus is conscious of a supernatural protection being accorded to Him while there is a work to be done, and in this we have His approved interpretation of the words in the Ninety-first Psalm, on which the tempter of souls had once in the wilderness attempted to put an unauthorised construction : " He shall give His angels a charge concerning thee, and on hands they shall bear thee, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone " (Ps. xci. 11-12 ; Matt. iv. 6 ; Luke iv. 10-11). Such divine protection does not justify God's servants in self-gloriously adventuring themselves into needless dangers, but it *does* justify them in preserving a calm and heavenly mind while in the path of duty. Here in the Johannine passage Jesus dwells on the amplitude of the opportunity given by God to carry out the allotted task. His words have additional point when we remember that for Himself this is the eleventh hour of the twelve.¹ The shadow of the

¹ H. J. Holtzmann.

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Cross has fallen on the scene, yet Jesus will work as long as daylight lasts, not heeding dangers in the way. Behind the words, though not expressed, is the thought that only he who is prepared to lay down life can bestow it. In this spirit Jesus will awaken Lazarus out of his "sleep" (xi. 1-16).

When Jesus and His disciples reach Bethany, Lazarus has been four days in the grave. In the words of Martha, who is the first to meet Jesus, there is a pang of regret that Jesus was not there while Lazarus lived, but this melts into the hope that something will yet be granted to the Saviour's prayers. Jesus answers: "Your brother will rise again." Martha, who has received this assurance many times during the last few days, when Jews from Jerusalem and other friends have been paying visits of sympathy, fears for the moment perhaps that Jesus too is offering only the accustomed consolation, and hesitates. Has the Master nothing for her but the familiar language of human condolence? "I know," she answers, "that he will rise *at the resurrection, at the last day.*" Resurrection at the end of time was part of the religious hope of every Jew, but till some further assurance is given by Christ, she will not commit herself to any immediate consolation. Then comes the great assurance of which the Raising of Lazarus is but the sacrament. The consolation which Christ imparts is not any agreed-upon dialect of sympathy, such as kindly

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Jews and others use in such cases, while pathetically conscious that they are straining both words and faith in the effort to assuage the sharpness of grief. It is as real as He Himself is real: Christ comes as *present* bestower of the life that shall never end. "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he who believes on me, even though he dies, will live, and no one who lives and believes on Me will ever die." Does Martha believe this? We may hold in reserve for the moment the theological and religious significance of this tremendous statement. Martha does not perhaps take in the whole meaning of what Jesus has said, but she falls back, as we all do in such cases, upon what she does understand and holds with all the tenacity of complete assurance. She knows at least that Jesus is *the Messiah*, and she clings to this fact: "Yes, Lord, I do believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, who comes into the world." It is absolutely necessary for her at this moment to hold on to certainties that belong to experience, and of these the fact that Jesus has revealed God is one, indeed the greatest. But it is equally necessary not to be put off with assurances which have not, not yet at least, been realised in experience. She will not *say* therefore that her faith has risen to the height marked by Jesus' words about the Resurrection. At the moment it is even a relief to go off in search of her sister Mary, and so gain time to take the words in.

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Hereupon a new element enters. Mary, when she comes, falls at Jesus' feet, but her words are only a pathetic repetition of the expressions previously used by her sister. Their chill despair and the demonstrations of grief by the bystanders provoke in Jesus a reaction, not, for the moment, of sympathy as the rendering of the English version "He groaned in spirit" might suggest, but of indignation: "He chafed inwardly and was disturbed" (xi. 33). The particular emotion of Jesus on this occasion was clearly due to the unbelief with which He saw Himself surrounded. And it might also appear from the surface of the evangelist's narrative that Jesus only now decided to go to Lazarus' grave, that in fact His perturbation arose from the recognition that the assurance of the Resurrection which He had given had failed to convince, and that nothing would now avail but to recall Lazarus from the dead. That this is not the evangelist's real meaning is, however, plain. He declares that Jesus' intention was from the beginning to "awake Lazarus out of sleep" (xi. 11). Jesus' indignation implies no lack of natural sympathy, as the tears into which He breaks at this moment plainly show (xi. 35). Nevertheless He experiences sorrow combined with anger at the lack of faith displayed by those who should have known better. The agitation recurs on the way to the grave (xi. 38).

The last act now follows. Lazarus is raised from

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the grave after he has lain there for four days. Popular imagination conceived the soul as continuing to hover for three days in proximity to the body, and this period had expired. But this did not prevent the Lord of Life from stepping forward and saying by the open grave, "Lazarus, come forth," nor did it prevent the man's spirit from returning to the body from which it had fled. The reference to the corruption which had set in is not without meaning for readers whose hope is that "this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." In every particular the raising of Lazarus is intended to foreshadow the great awakening at the end. But the power which calls the dead to life has been transferred to Jesus. Jesus is the Resurrection because He is the source of Life to men (xi. 38-44).

The wealth of detail with which the narrative is related shows that the evangelist had at command some very circumstantial tradition of the original incident. The authority whom he followed must have to a large extent supplied the main features of the whole exposition. But that the main interest of the evangelist is to establish the fact of *spiritual* resurrection through the power of Christ is manifest.

The central thought round which everything else turns is the assurance given in verses 25-26, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he who believes in Me, even if he dies, will live, and no one

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who lives and believes in Me will ever die." To this principle all that goes before leads up, and from this principle all that follows later is derived. Whatever else the words mean, they certainly imply that for the Christian consciousness *the Resurrection of the Dead is no longer bound up purely or primarily with a historical event at the end of time, but connects immediately with the Person of Jesus Christ and with the life which He bestows here and now.* Christian faith and hope in the life to come have been given a new centre. They no longer depend on a miraculous event of future history, but on the present miracle of Christ's action on the soul. Men experience resurrection when they come into saving contact with Him. The personal life which is thus evoked cannot be lost, but is an everlasting possession. Hence interest recedes from the apocalyptic programme of the future, and gathers more and more round the Person of the Saviour. He, and no longer a prophetic plan of the ages, bears the weight of man's hope of immortality. And here the significance of what was manifested to the world in Christ reaches its absolute climax.

Accordingly, the evangelist regards the Raising of Lazarus as the sign or demonstration which precipitated the resolve of the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities to put Jesus to death. We may reserve for the moment the meaning of the fateful advice now given to the Sanhedrin by Caiaphas, because it

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belongs properly to the next chapter, which will deal with the significance of the Messiah's death. Caiaphas' words had, however, the effect of setting in motion the final measures of the Jews to bring Jesus to the Cross. Jesus accordingly withdrew with His disciples from Judæa and took up His residence on the borders of the trans-Jordanic desert in an otherwise unknown town bearing the name Ephraim. Meantime the ecclesiastical authorities issued edicts that if any one knew where Jesus was, he should give information. This statement has the significance of showing where the evangelist locates the exact nature of the treachery of Judas (xi. 45-57).

CHAPTER VII

Anticipations of the Passion. Significance of Christ's Death and Resurrection

THE approaching death of Christ is foreshadowed in three events belonging to this period. These are (1) the fateful counsel given by Caiaphas to the Sanhedrin (xi. 47-52), (2) the anointing of Jesus by Mary of Bethany and His royal reception at Jerusalem by the pilgrim-multitude (xii. 1-19), (3) the request of certain Greeks to see Jesus (xii. 20-36). Thereupon follows a brief summation by the evangelist of the aspects under which Christ had been manifested to the world, and a criticism of the reception which He had met with at the hands of the Jewish people (xii. 37-50).

THE UNCONSCIOUS PROPHECY OF CAIAPHAS

The many "signs" wrought by Jesus, above all the Raising of Lazarus, had produced for the ecclesiastical authorities in Jerusalem an intolerable situation. The circle of Jesus' followers was growing.

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With each new manifestation of His power there had occurred a fresh lapse from the ranks of Judaism. Things had reached a point at which the Sanhedrin persuades itself that, unless something is done, the people will rise, and the Roman power will descend and take away from the Jews "both place and nation." In other words, both the religion and the political status of Judaism are imperilled. At this moment Caiaphas, the high-priest, made a statement to the Sanhedrin which, read in the light of subsequent history, was, says the evangelist, a "prophecy" of Jesus' death on behalf of the nation and of the dispersed children of God. Finding his colleagues in a dilemma, he charged them with blindness to the signs of the times and said: "You do not consider that it is to your advantage that one man die for the sake of the people, rather than that the whole nation be ruined" (xi. 50). As uttered by Caiaphas, the words might seem to contain nothing more or less than the Macchiavellian suggestion to put Jesus out of the way rather than risk a further avalanche of converts to His side, which might have dangerous political consequences. To the evangelist, however, the words have a mightier import. Caiaphas does not speak for himself, but as high-priest of the year he prophesies. In more ancient days the high-priest counted as an organ of divine revelation in virtue of the oracle of the Urim and Thummim which the priestly

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legislation assigned to him (Exod. xxviii. 30 ; Lev. viii. 8 ; Num. xxvii. 21). This oracle and the powers attached to it had apparently ceased with the exile (Josephus, *Antiquities* III. 8. 9). Here, however, the evangelist, who is not in the least concerned with the general powers appertaining to the high-priesthood, sees in Caiaphas' utterance a distinct prediction of the atoning and reconciling import of the death of Christ, and explains his foresight by his office. "He prophesied that Jesus was destined to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to bring together the scattered children of God" (xi. 47-52).

Thus was the necessity of the atoning death of Christ avowed in the very courts of Judaism. Caiaphas uttered greater things than he knew. Not only did he with a kind of Sophoclean irony predict the event which was to bring about the downfall of the Jewish theocracy and the formation of a new Israel of God, but his words furnished in a sense the rationale of the cross of Jesus. He saw that either the nation must perish or Jesus must die in its stead, and therefore his words, though humanly motivated by a cynical policy, were a "sign" to his generation where they must look for the hope of salvation. It was indeed *divinely* necessary that Jesus should be numbered with the transgressors, not merely for the saving of Israel but for the reconciling of mankind to God. Politicians by seeing no other

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way out of their dilemma than to make Jesus a scape-goat for the nation were involuntarily setting their seal to the divine necessity of His Cross.

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY. CHRIST ANOINTED FOR DEATH

Six days before the Passover on which Jesus suffered, a second anticipation of His death took place in the loving act of Mary of Bethany. The story of the anointing of Jesus by a woman in the house of Simon the Leper at Bethany is found in Mark xiv. 3-9, and Matt. xxvi. 6-13, but by neither of the two Synoptists is any mention made of her name. The Fourth Gospel names her as Mary, the sister of Martha, and brings the incident into connection with the recent Raising of Lazarus. At a supper given in honour of Jesus, at which Martha served, and Lazarus was present as one of the company, Mary brought her costly vase of perfume, and anointed Jesus. The Synoptists say that she anointed His head: John says she anointed His feet, and afterwards wiped them with her hair. The latter are traits which recall another incident which the tradition preserved in Luke vii. 36-50 locates in Galilee. Whether therefore the fourth evangelist has combined features of two different narratives must remain an open question. On the whole,

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the connection of the episode with the Raising of Lazarus excepted, the Fourth Gospel agrees with the Markan narrative ; only, whereas Mark and Matthew ascribe the criticism of Mary's act to the disciples as a whole, John confines it to Judas, and adds that the objection of Judas had its motive, not as alleged by him in solicitude for the poor, but in dishonesty (xii. 1-8).

What now was the motive and significance of Mary's act ? In the Johannine context it is naturally and inevitably construed as an expression of gratitude for the Saviour's raising of Lazarus. But, apart from the fact that this particular motive does not exist in the Synoptic parallel, it is probably wrong to limit Mary's beautiful act to the operation of a single feeling. That unbounded personal gratitude was present need not be questioned. Nevertheless when allowance is made for the character of the Saviour's acknowledgment both in the Synoptic narrative and here, it would appear that Mary's act originated in some kind of intuitive perception of Christ's impending sacrifice. Jesus was at this moment absorbed in the thought of His passion. The " hour " of which he had so often spoken was at hand. Yet of the disciples none, and of the company none but Mary divined the nature of what was awaiting Him. Only one woman's unerring sympathy broke through the general blindness and, grasping the cost at which that life of ministering

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love had been lived, suited her action to the thought in the only way that seemed appropriate. Desiring to do something that in some faint way corresponded to the sacrifice of Jesus, she brushed aside the obvious hesitations which her own self-consciousness and the probable comments of unsympathetic beholders might dictate. Thereby her action stands in complete antithesis to the unimaginative morality of Judaism of which Judas is here the disingenuous spokesman. Judaism had exalted almsgiving above all other virtues, had made it indeed the summation and highest instance of righteousness. But by the very utilitarianism which comes out in this preference Judaism had lost sense and feeling for many other fine things belonging to the life of the spirit, and therefore Jesus' defence of Mary is in part a defence of the fineness of the thing done. "She has done a beautiful act to Me" : thus according to the Synoptic narrative He dismisses an unworthy criticism (Mark xiv. 6).

But it is not because of the beauty of the thing done, or because of the rightness which on any but a utilitarian view belongs to such expressions of devotion, that Jesus so greatly exalts Mary's act, but because of the relation which exists between it and His own approaching sacrifice. In Mary's act He sees in a sense His own coronation or anointing for death. "She has done her part," so runs the fuller explanation in Mark, "she has anticipated the

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anointing of My body for the burial." That is, the act is a forecast of, and, so to speak, a response to the Cross. Therefore Jesus says: "Wherever the Gospel is preached the whole world over, the thing which she has done will be mentioned as a memorial of her" (Mark xiv. 8-9). In John the acknowledgment is somewhat different: "Permit her to keep the ointment for the day of My burial" (xii. 7).¹ That is to say, Mary's act finds its ultimate meaning and justification in the context of Christ's passion. It is an anointing or designation of the Saviour for His sacrifice. As such, He who beyond all others was the friend of the poor must and will permit it. *Anointed for death*—yes, it is in death that His Messiahship is truly proclaimed and exhibited. Jesus accepts the "sign" as in the Synoptic record He accepts the confession of Peter. Both are tokens of the Divine Will for Him, and in both cases it is to the Cross that the intimations point. God through these incidents is declaring His holy will for His Son.

The Messianic entrance into Jerusalem is related in general agreement with the Synoptic narrative. The fact that the fourth evangelist, here differing from the Synoptists, places Mary's act *before* the ascent to the city might be taken as an indication that the sign of the anointing was the necessary

¹ This is the reading of the most ancient Codices, and of the Sinaitic Syriac version.

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preliminary to Christ's last manifestation of Himself to the nation. But as there is no clear hint of this in the narrative itself, it would be wrong to impute this association of ideas to him. Peculiar to him is the statement that the welcome given to Jesus by the pilgrim-throng was inspired by the Raising of Lazarus. This imparts a new aspect to the royal entrance. Jesus enters Jerusalem as the Lord and Giver of Life. All the more pointed is that disclosure of His own death which is made in the next section (xii. 9-19).

THE COMING OF THE GREEKS. THE REASON WHY THE MESSIAH DIES

The third anticipation of Christ's death at this time was the request of certain Greek pilgrims to see Him. These Greeks were proselytes, representatives of those sections of pagan society which had been drawn to Judaism by the superiority of its religious and ethical ideals, and had taken upon them to some extent the ordinances of the Law. A sprinkling of such adherents would be present among the throngs of Jewish pilgrims who had come up for the Feast, and it excites no surprise that some of them had heard the name of Jesus and conceived a desire to see Him. It is probable that the prominence which the evangelist gives to Philip and

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Andrew in connection with the incident reflects the later importance of these two names in the history of the Christian mission in Greek Asia Minor. As he sees it, the coming of the visitors is a forecast of the greater harvest which was to be gathered from the fields of the world as the result of Christ's atoning death.

In the Synoptic history Jesus, while in the district of Tyre and Sidon, had felt the call of the heathen world, and perhaps for a moment experienced the longing desire to go to its aid. But from this desire he had turned away through a sense of the immediate urgency of His present task. It was to Israel and its lost sheep that He had been sent, and He would not forsake the appointed field of His work (Mark vii. 24-27 ; Matt. xv. 21-26).

But here in the Johannine passage the coming of the Greeks in the last week of Jesus' earthly life is regarded as, like Mary's act, a sign pointing forward to the Cross. It is a premonition of the greater influence which Jesus is to win when the limits of the earthly life are passed, and He is exalted by the Cross to a universal eminence. Jesus acknowledges the sign, and says : " The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." Thereupon follows an explanation of the saying. Christ's " glorifying " means His death on the Cross. Only by death, by laying down the earthly life which He had taken, can the Messiah enter on His wider reign.

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“Solemnly I tell you, except a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains merely what it was : but if it dies it produces much fruit.” This is the law for the Messiah, and it is the law for the disciple. It is possible to love one’s own spirit or life in such a way as to lose it ; indeed only he who counts his own life cheap, treats it as nothing, puts it from him, will preserve it unto the world to come. Life must be yielded in order to win life. With this statement we reach the climax of the Fourth Gospel’s interpretation of the Cross of Jesus. Jesus had to die that He might enter on His wider reign.

Formally, this necessity may be illustrated by considering the inevitable limitations imposed on Jesus by the conditions of His earthly life. By His incarnation, by His appearance in history under the external form of a Jew, an insurmountable restriction was placed upon His glory among non-Jews or Gentiles. The woman of Samaria, for example, could regard His Jewish nationality as justifying a certain reserve on her part (iv. 9), and the fact of His being a Galilean prejudiced His cause in the midst of the elect nation itself (i. 46 ; vii. 41, 52). But these limitations are transcended when the Logos who had assumed Jewish humanity in Jesus lays down His earthly life, has it indeed taken from Him by the Jews. The “Christ after the flesh” (2 Cor. v. 16) becomes the universal Lord, the Spirit (2 Cor. iii. 17).

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But the principle that the Christ had to die in order to enter on His wider reign was first arrived at, not by logical analysis, but by the facts of history. The proof of it came with the Christian experience which dates from the Cross, and which finds expression in the statement, so characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, that Christ being lifted up from the earth draws all men to Himself (xii. 32 ; iii. 14 ; viii. 28). The Death of Christ, interpreted by the words spoken at the Last Supper, proved itself the greatest of all religious motives. Because Christ passed within the veil as Intercessor for His people and as Mediator of a new Covenant, acceptance with God and the assurance of salvation ceased to be dependent on the conditions or terms of the Jewish religion. A new way of peace had been opened up, and therefore the wall or partition which hitherto had separated covenanted from uncovenanted mercies, and Jew from Gentile (Col. i. 19-23 ; Eph. ii. 11-22), automatically fell to the ground. The death of Christ thus inaugurated His world-wide dominion. In the present passage this consequence is represented as foreseen, and supplies the key to the solemn exaltation of the Saviour's words (xii. 20-26).

But swift on the exaltation follows a moment of anguish, as the actuality of the hour announced by the sign comes home to Jesus, and we have a passage which is in a sense the Johannine counterpart

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to the Synoptic Agony in the Garden (xii. 27-28). Christ's soul is "troubled," but will He ask the Father to save Him from the hour which has come so vividly near? Nay, it is the Father's will that He should face it, and He will only say, "Father, glorify Thy name." This final act of submission on the part of the Son was, says the evangelist, signalised by a voice from Heaven, which proclaimed that the Father's purpose had been, and would be still further honoured by the Son. This Divine "Voice" is, like the similar message received at the Transfiguration (Mark ix. 7), intended for the bystanders, not for Jesus Himself. It marks an experience of the disciples in which it became divinely clear to them that the *suffering* of Jesus fulfilled the will of God, that, in other words, the final mark of Christ's election is His Cross. The approaching hour marks a "crisis" of world-history, when Satan will be dethroned, and Christ on the Cross will be the universal Lord (xii. 27-33).

THE VERDICT OF HISTORY

The closing verses of Chapter xii. sum up the results of Christ's manifestation of Himself to the world. The whole Jewish attitude has been one of unbelief. Not only do the Jews repudiate the whole conception of a dying Messiah; they refuse the

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Divine evidence given in His life (xii. 34-36). So phenomenal and sustained an opposition cannot, in the evangelist's view, be due to accidental causes. As he thinks of it, the unbelief spoken of in Isaiah liii. 1, the blindness and hardness of heart predicted in Isaiah vi. 9-10, rise before his mind. The Jewish rejection of the Saviour is a clear fulfilment of the Scriptures (xii. 36-41). Only thus can a reason be given why even those leaders of the nation who believed had not the courage to come out into the open. They were hindered, of course, by the fear of losing popular favour, but at what a cost they had held back! Jesus had cried and said: "He who believes on Me, believes not on Me but on Him who sent Me." The evangelist reviews the teaching which Christ had consistently given (xii. 44-50). It is so plain that Jesus spoke from God. It is so plain that eternal life depends on what He said. In the end no conclusion remains to the evangelist but that the Jews in rejecting Christ have turned their backs upon God.

CHAPTER VIII

Arrival of the Hour. Christ Washes His Disciples' Feet. The Last Discourse of Farewell

CHAPTERS xiii.-xvii. contain the record of that more intimate revelation which Christ imparted to His own in the closing hours of His life. The world has been left behind, and Jesus speaks to the men whom the Father has given Him, and whom none can pluck from His hand. We are taken, as it were, into the innermost sanctuary, and shown the nature of the confidence which exists between the Lord and His Church. The Synoptic Gospels also recognise that Jesus in the later period of His ministry turned from the world to the special instruction of the Twelve (Mark viii. 31f.). In one point, however, the account of the instruction in John differs very markedly from that contained in the Synoptics. The apocalyptic vision of the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven, which lights up the closing chapters of the Synoptic teaching, is absent, and its place is taken by the deeply mystical and inward doctrine of Christ's permanent

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indwelling in His followers, His eternal coming to His own.

THE WASHING OF THE DISCIPLES' FEET

The solemn manner of the opening words of Chap. xiii. imparts to the dramatic incident of the Foot-washing a significance which no reader can fail to notice. The act is staged, so to speak, against the background of the whole completed manifestation of God in Christ. Jesus knows that His hour to go to the Father has arrived. He acts in the full consciousness of His Lordship, and of His past and future glory. The horizon has widened to take in the full range of the divine purpose in redemption, and with all this in view Jesus the Lord renders a last act of loving service to His disciples. Love to His own had been the motive of all His words and deeds, but this, says the evangelist, was love *in extremis*. The remark "He loved them to the end" may mean that He loved them to the last hour of His life, to the moment when He could say "It is finished," or it may mean that He loved them "to the uttermost," i.e., to the last limit to which love could go. In the one case the perfect proof of the love of Jesus is its continuance at an hour like this; in the other case it is the nature of the thing which He condescended to do. While supper was

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proceeding—according to the fourth evangelist's reckoning this is the evening of Nisan 13, which precedes the Passover, and therefore the meal is not the Paschal observance proper—Jesus takes a servitor's napkin, and after filling a basin with water, proceeds to wash His disciples' feet. If this act represented an accustomed civility which the disciples had omitted because none of them would stoop to it in this hour of expectant ambition, the practical character of the lesson would be thrown into intense relief. But as nothing in the context suggests a customary ceremony, we ought perhaps to see the point in the wholly unexpected character of the act, which startled the disciples and left them powerless to reply. That He whom they had expected momentarily to reach for the royal robe and the crown should take on Him the form of a servant and go down on His knees to them ! Nothing was said till Jesus comes to Peter, and then there is a storm of remonstrance. Christ must never wash *his* feet. Even though the Master declares that there is a reason, which Peter will later discover, the disciple remains obdurate. Only when it is represented to him that, unless he consents, he disinherits himself in Christ, or has nothing in common with the Master, does the proud, but now humbled, disciple give way, and impetuously proffer not only his feet but his head and hands. Christ answers that it is enough to wash his *feet* (xiii. 1-11).

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What is the meaning of the incident? It is presently explained by Jesus as an "example," which He has given to the disciples, of the spirit in which they should act to one another. They call Him Teacher and Lord rightly, but they may judge by His act how He intends them to serve. The servant is not greater than his master, the apostle must not claim exemption from a law to which the Lord, who commissioned him, submitted. In order to serve *Him*, the disciples must lay down pride and glory; however gifted and distinguished, they must think of life in terms of service. It is this practical aspect of Jesus' act which explains ultimately the instinctive reaction of Peter. Too proud to stoop in his own life, he cannot bear to think of Christ so greatly condescending to His inferiors. Nevertheless, there can be no further avoidance of the issue latent in Christ's demand. Peter forfeits his inheritance in Christ, if he does not accept this consecrating seal of love, and thus pledge himself to act in the same spirit.

But while this is the sense in which Jesus explains the act, it is plain that the evangelist sees in it at the same time a symbolic or sacramental significance. This comes out clearly in the words of verse 10: "He who has bathed requires only to have his feet washed." If this is a genuine word of the Lord it can only mean that Christ holds Peter to the need of constant cleansing and forgiveness. A man may

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be changed in heart, and yet be soiled in the daily contact with the world. Regenerate, he still needs absolving and pardoning grace. It is probable, however, that this symbolic interpretation of the incident is due to the evangelist himself. It is quite in his manner to see an allegory or a sacrament in such an incident, and to expound it accordingly. In the present case he sees an allusion to baptism in its relation to the life of the Christian. Even the disciple whose past sins have been washed away in his initial consecration contracts impurity daily in thought, word and deed, and for this impurity, the "sin which so easily besets" him, continual cleansing is required. As we see by Hebrews vi. 4-8, post-baptismal sin created a grave problem for early Christian thought, and in some of its forms seemed to place the offender beyond the power of Divine grace. The fourth evangelist, however, discerns in the Foot-washing a parable of the truth that sin which is not wilful, but which inevitably cleaves to the disciple as long as he is in the world, comes within the range of the Saviour's expiatory action on the soul. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive them, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The Foot-washing is thus, in St. Bernard's words, "*sacramentum remissionis peccatorum quotidianorum.*"

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THE DESIGNATION OF THE TRAITOR

Throughout the above scene, foreknowledge of the traitor's purpose weighed heavily on Jesus' mind (xiii. 2, 10-11), and now comes to open expression. Why did Jesus include Judas in the chosen band of followers? As the fourth evangelist sees it, it was not without prevision of the traitor's ultimate designs. Jesus knew what was coming, but He chose Judas in order to expedite the word of Holy Scripture in Psalm xli. 9. The disclosure of the treason, which is now necessary, gives the keenest pain to the Master, but cannot be withheld if the faith of the other disciples is to be saved from disaster when the blow ultimately falls. Jesus does not reveal the identity of the traitor. The passing of the bread, which served as a private sign to the Beloved Disciple reclining by the side of Jesus, was in itself an act of courtesy, such as might be paid to an honoured guest, and it need not be that even Judas thereby saw himself discovered. Nevertheless, the moment that Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. Taking the bread of the Lord unworthily, he "eats judgment" to himself (1 Cor. xi. 29), and the Lord, reading his thoughts, gives him his dismissal (xiii. 18-30).

Here, as throughout the whole history of the Passion, the evangelist is concerned to show that the initiative at every stage rested and remained with

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the Saviour. As no one takes His life from Him, but He lays it down willingly (x. 18), so here He is not deceived by Judas, nor taken by surprise when he goes over to the enemy. His death is not due to any disastrous conjunction of circumstances, but in every feature has been foreseen and willed. Nevertheless Jesus experiences deep relief when the door closes on the renegade disciple. He has already said that, in spite of the treason, the faithful in the world will receive Himself in the persons of His loyal followers, and in receiving Him will receive God (xiii. 20). Now He rejoices in the unalloyed fellowship of faithful hearts which is left to Him, and in the thought that God's purpose will proceed without hindrance or interruption. The time that remains is short, and Jesus will spend it in laying on His disciples the "new commandment" of love. Love to one another—here the lesson set in the Foot-washing is taken up again—will be the sign and proof to the world that a society of faithful hearts has remained loyal to Christ, and is distinctly and forever His (xiii. 31-35).

CONSOLATIONS OF FAITH

The impending departure of Jesus has cast its shadow on the group, and there has been a hint of further defection on the part of the disciples, and of

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denial on the part of Peter (xiii. 36-38). Nevertheless, the disciples are not to be disquieted. Jesus has taken the whole anguish of the hour upon Himself (cp. xii. 27, xiii. 21), and His followers must trust in Him. Nor is the peace, to which they are thus exhorted, a Stoic *ataraxia*, a mere negation or suppression of fears, but the positive peace of religious faith: "Have faith in God, have faith also in Me." For what are the considerations which should impart comfort and produce confidence at this moment? Jesus will speak first of these. In the first place, this world from which He is going, and in which He is leaving His faithful ones, is not the only home or resting-place of the spirit: God's house, the universe which He has made, has many other "mansions." Had it been otherwise, would Jesus have said that He was going away to prepare a "place" for His followers? In the second place, His going is temporary, provisional, a preparation for coming again, and receiving His loved ones into a never-to-be-broken fellowship. They must lift their minds above the present world and the present hour, and think of that better world and age which is to be. In the third place, if His departure to the Father thus guarantees, and defines the nature of, the Christian hope of a home in heaven, it also illumines and prescribes the way thither. The disciples know the road to where Jesus is going, and they can follow in His steps (xiv. 1-4).

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To some of the disciples, however, this last statement appears not of a kind to pass unchallenged. It seems to go beyond what can and ought to be assumed. The life beyond is wrapped in impenetrable mystery. It gives no hint of itself, either of its existence or of its character, in present experience. What troubles a mind constituted like that of Thomas is just that we do *not* know the way to where Jesus is going. Jesus answers that the way is Himself. Thomas must surely have been conscious, while he walked with Christ, of being led in a certain direction, nor can he really have doubted that that was the direction to *God*. Can he not therefore, now that Jesus is leaving his side, continue on in that direction, and believe that it will lead to the goal? If he had properly reflected on what he has had in Christian experience, could he have doubted his bearings at this moment? No, the Father is the Goal of Life, in whom our rest is won, and Christ is the true and living Way to His presence (xiv. 5-7).

But is the Father Himself plain to the eye of faith? God hides Himself so mysteriously. Man cannot by searching find Him out. During their pilgrimage with Jesus on earth the disciples have found in Him a refuge from the mystery of God. Now when they are to be cast entirely on faith, they doubt their power to continue in the path which they have trod. If only the Father could be seen, if only they could clasp His hand in the darkness!

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“Lord,” said Philip, who here takes up the argument, “show us *the Father*, and we have all we need.” Jesus’ answer is, Has Philip not already found in Him the certitude which he seeks? Has he not been conscious, while in fellowship with Christ, of a higher presence making itself felt through Jesus’ words and deeds? Has he not felt the grip of that Unseen Presence? There he has the assurance of the Father. Can he not maintain that assurance now by fixing his faith on Jesus, and continuing in Him? (xiv. 8-11).

In this manner Christian experience itself is found to yield the certainties of God, heaven, and the way of life. The disciples will have these certainties to inspire and support them. But in connection with Christ’s going there are still other consolations, which belong peculiarly to the period which dates from His departure (xiv. 12-24).

| In the first place, Christ’s work on earth does not cease with His departure to the Father. His disciples continue the task which He lays down, and in their hands it is to assume greater proportions even than in His. If the achievement of Jesus on earth has been a miracle, still more so will be the future achievement of His Church. It will do “greater things” than He. For Christ, exalted to the Father, will represent His disciples at the source of power, and all that they will ask in His name will be done for them by a Father who desires to be

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honoured through His Son. The departure of Jesus will inaugurate a new era of prayer, will give to prayer a new intensity and reality by giving it a new ground of confidence, and will thus lead on a vast extension of His work and reign (xiv. 12-14).

In the second place, conditionally upon their obedience to His commandments, Christ's place on earth will be taken by another Friend or Helper, who will be their "Paraclete" or Advocate. This representative of the absent Saviour, defined here as the Spirit of Truth in antithesis to the "spirit of error" which is abroad in the world, will abide in and with the disciples, and be the communal possession of the Church (xiv. 15-17).

In the third place, the disciples will see Jesus again. Unseen by the world, yet alive for evermore, He will manifest Himself in the power of His resurrection. The disciples will not be left in any doubt that Jesus lives, and that He is with the Father: nor will they fail to know that they are mystically one with Him, as He is with them. For love to Christ, shown in obedience, will find its answer in a sense of being loved by the heavenly Father, and of constantly receiving fresh visions of the Risen Lord. Such visions cannot, however, be given to the world, because they are inwardly or ethically conditioned. The disciples must not expect that Christ will be *spectacularly* revealed to mankind: the vision of His glory belongs to faith (xiv. 18-24).

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That the above analysis of the consolations of faith given by the dying Lord to His disciples has its roots to some extent in a consciousness of the course of Christian history from the Resurrection onwards will hardly be denied. The evangelist has lived to see Christianity not only launched in the world, but making continuous progress over a period of more than fifty years, and it is from this standpoint that, here as elsewhere, he gives us his interpretation of the last words of the Master. On the one hand, he sees that the whole progress of the Church, its whole victory in the world, has been due to answers to prayer in Jesus' name (xiv. 12-14). On the other hand, he sees that the Church has continuously possessed since Jesus' death a new sense or experience of the living God through the Spirit (xiv. 15-17). Still further, he sees that the vision of Christ's coming in glory on the clouds has been progressively realised in Christian experience. It has not been held up to some future date, but is fulfilling itself in spiritual history (xiv. 18-24).

Such are the grounds of Christian confidence, and in the light also of further revelations which the Spirit will impart, the disciples are to have "peace," not indeed the world's peace but Christ's. The world gives only to take away. Its peace comes by escape from things rather than by power to endure and overcome them. Its offer does not cover our deepest needs, nor does it compose the strife

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within. The emperor, as Epictetus observes, can give the world peace from war, but not "from passion, from grief, from envy." Christ's peace covers these. He has wrestled with, and overcome, not only the anguish of the present hour, but the spiritual power of the world. He has done something which makes peace in the inward sense possible for His followers. Now He bequeaths this peace. His disciples must take it as His last legacy and gift. As the Kingdom of God may be realised in individual hearts, though the world disowns it, so the peace of Christ may be an inalienable possession of the believer though the whole world is at strife. Christ's death signifies the overthrow of Satan, for against Him Satan has no claim or charge to bring, and with Christ's victory the victory of His Church has become a moral certainty (xiv. 25-31).

It is certainly a high demand that is here made of the disciples. From their own point of view they were being left without a hope. "They were to see all their false hopes of a worldly kingdom dashed in pieces. All their greed for power and honour was going to die in their breasts. They were going to be left with one thing only . . . their love for Jesus." But this foundation was to stand in the trembling of the world.

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THE SECRET OF POWER. ABIDING IN CHRIST

The last words of Chap. xiv. seem to indicate the termination at this point of the Upper Room Discourse, and therefore it is thought by some scholars that Chapters xv. and xvi. originally stood before Chap. xiv., not after it as in the text which has come down to us. Dr. Moffatt, for example, proposes to find the original order of sections as follows: xiii. 1-31, xv. 1-27, xvi. 1-33, xiii. 31-38, xiv. 1-31. But, apart from the fact that there is no textual evidence to support the theory that the original order has been disturbed, it is surely not inconceivable that the evangelist first wrote Chap. xiv. with the idea of ending there, and afterwards, when material for the continuation of the Discourse suggested itself, appended the fuller exposition of Christ's parting words which we find in Chapters xv. and xvi. As a matter of fact, these chapters are only an amplification and elucidation of the ideas already present in Chapter xiv.

The thought that Israel is *God's Vine*, brought from Egypt, and planted in the Holy Land, is a favourite idea of the Old Testament, and appears there in various relations (Isa. v. 1-7, Jer. ii. 21, Ezek. xv. 1-6, xix. 10-14, Psalm lxxx. 8-16). The adoption of the metaphor here to illustrate the mystical relation between Christ and His believing

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followers signifies the supersession of the ancient theocracy by the new society of Jesus. The figure is developed much more inwardly and personally than anywhere in the Old Testament. Christ is Himself the real Vine of God ; His Father is the Vinedresser ; His disciples are the branches. By the aid of this symbolism is pointed out the necessity of close adhesion on the part of the Christian society to Jesus, involving as it does (1) the disciplining of the members of the society, (2) their drawing of power and life from above, (3) their yielding the fruits of practical service. In the first place, non-fruitful branches are cut off ; even the fruitful branches are "cleansed" or pruned in the interests of their greater usefulness. Christ's true disciples have all received an initial purification through His word, but as in xiii. 10 the first baptismal cleansing needs to be followed by later submissions to the purifying grace of Christ, so here the first ingrafting into Him involves the constant effort to maintain vital adhesion. In the second place, the secret of life and power is this "abiding" in, or continually renewed adhesion to Christ : external separation from Christ follows upon any inward loosening of relations. A branch separated from the Vine may bear leaves and fruit this season, but the next season it is dead. So must disciples preserve a living communion with the Master, for apart from Him they can do nothing. In the third place, by prayer and

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continuance in the love of Jesus they must bear fruit, for only such useful discipleship glorifies the Father (xv. 1-10).

The use made of this analogy of the Vine may seem to the followers of Jesus to contain more of warning than of encouragement. Nevertheless, the true point is that Christ desires His joy to be the possession of His disciples. He does not wish them to face the task of life with something less than joy, something less than love, something less than peace. Rather would He raise them to a level of life at which their spiritual equipment will be complete, and love, joy, peace and the other fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22) will freely render themselves. The allegory of the Vine is accordingly explained. The relation between Christ and His faithful disciples is constituted by love. In Christ is the supreme instance of love, for He lays down His life for His friends. And what does the debt under which His followers are thus laid to Him involve on their part? Primarily that they must make love the principle of life. But this also is involved, that they have been raised to a plane of religious life transcending the Old Testament or Jewish ideal. In other words, they are no longer "servants," who obey orders but have no real understanding of their Master's purpose; rather are they "friends," to whom has been imparted the whole loving confidence of Christ regarding the Heavenly Father, and who therefore

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can be trusted, with insight and joy, as well as with the sense of personal responsibility, to carry out the Father's will. All this marks the emergence in Christianity of a new religious ideal going beyond that of Judaism. Judaism, with all its special illumination, was always lapsing back into despotic conceptions of God with the result that the heart had gone out of its service. Finally, the disciples must remember that Christ has chosen them, and therefore He retains responsibility for them and for the results of their work. He has appointed them to produce "fruit," therefore something new, something that was not in the world before, something that would never have been but for His own Spirit working in them. And prayer, prayer in Jesus' name, is to be the means of this productivity (xv. 11-17).

On the other hand, just because they are Christ's and not the world's, they must expect the world's opposition and hatred. The same law which operates with regard to the Master operates with regard to the disciple. Disciples will be excommunicated from the Synagogue, and those who slay them will think that they are doing God service. And all because these men have not seen God in Christ, have not acknowledged the Divine where it was immediately presented. Nevertheless, the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, will be bearing constant witness to Christ; the disciples too will

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be witnesses on the strength of their experience (xv. 18—xvi. 4).

EXPEDIENCY OF CHRIST'S GOING. (1) THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT

Chapter xvi. is really an expansion of the consolations of faith already given in xiv. 12-24. Sorrow at the Master's going so overwhelms the disciples that they have not even the heart to ask whither His departure carries Him. Nevertheless, it is repeated that His going is for their good, since only through His ascension to the Father does the Holy Spirit come to them (xvi. 5-7). We must now briefly review the various passages in which the coming and office of the Holy Spirit in the Church are referred to.

In an earlier passage the evangelist says that the word of Jesus "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink, etc." was a reference to the Spirit which His Church was destined to receive. For, he adds, "As yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified." It is perfectly plain here that by the Spirit the evangelist means a new principle of religious life which was not in the world till Jesus died and rose again. Israel indeed had known the work of God's Spirit in the inner moods of the soul (Psalm li. 1 if.) as well as in the inspiration

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of prophecy and of other extraordinary ministries. But the Church dates the operation of what it calls the Spirit from the period succeeding Christ's resurrection, and this can only mean that the inspiration in question supervened upon, and was causally connected with the new convictions and experiences inaugurated by that event. In this sense the evangelist can here say that the coming of the Spirit was conditional upon Christ being "glorified." The Spirit, in order to work, had to have an instrument, and this instrument was the completed manifestation of God in Christ (vii. 37-39).

Again, in Chap. xiv. the Saviour is represented as giving the assurance that at His departure the Father will send to the disciples another "Paraclete" or "Advocate," who will dwell with and in His Church. Jesus, as we see by Matt. x. 19-20, must often have spoken of His followers being assisted in their evangelical work and testimony before the world by the Spirit of the Father. Here it is indicated that the gift of the Spirit is conditional upon their obedience, and with reference to His function He is called the Spirit of Truth. As such He will instruct the disciples, and bring to their remembrance all that Jesus had said in the course of His earthly life. The Spirit is the mentor who keeps the mind of the Christian society on the teaching of the Master (xiv. 15-17, 26).

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Later, in Chap. xv. the Spirit's witness to Christ is set over against the world's hatred and bitterness. We find the same connection of ideas in the Synoptic teaching (Matt. x. 19-20, Luke xii. 11-12), but whereas in the Synoptic teaching the Spirit's presence and activity are connected with extraordinary hours, when the disciple is on trial before the world, here He appears as the normal and constant source of Christian revelation (xv. 26).

All these strands of thought are finally woven together in the great passage xvi. 7-15. The Holy Spirit appears (1) as the supreme Advocate of Christ before the legal courts of the world, (2) as the principle of a developing Christian revelation, (3) as specially the interpreter of Christ. First, the word of Jesus that the Spirit of God would assist the testimony of His disciples before courts and magistrates is explained in the Johannine passage as meaning that the Spirit will secure a clear verdict on all the disputed questions arising between Christ and the world. The world that placed Jesus, and that now places Jesus' followers, on trial judges the guilt to be on their side and the righteousness to be on its own. But the Spirit by powerful inward demonstration will compel a reversal of this verdict, and will show on which side truly lay the sin, and on which side the righteousness. It will prove that the guilt was the world's, because it rejected the God who in Jesus was reconciling it to

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Himself. It will show that the righteousness was Christ's, for He, the Holy One, sentenced to death by the world, passed in glory to the right hand of the Father, where He lives to make intercession for His believing ones, as their only actual source of holiness. And as for judgment, the Spirit will make it manifest that the trial of Christ was really the trial of the world, when the evil principle that rules the world received his final overthrow and condemnation. Men think that they won a victory over Jesus and His cause. It is not so, for the final victory is His. Thus the Spirit's first work is to set men right regarding the issue between Christ and the world, in other words, to put the right interpretation on the Cross (xvi. 7-11).

Secondly, it is the Spirit's function to lead the Church to a more perfect grasp and understanding of its faith. There are truths which Jesus cannot impart now, because He wills that His yoke should be light, but these truths the Spirit will bring to light as time goes on. Not that the Spirit is in any sense an independent source of new truth. Rather is it His function to apply, and to make effectual, the existing content of the Christian revelation (xvi. 12-13).

Finally, the Spirit will glorify Christ, using for this purpose the new motives and impulses which Christ has created, and through them interpreting the Saviour progressively to the Church.

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The Spirit does not go beyond Christ. The whole content of Divine revelation is already given *in* Christ. The Spirit merely takes the things of Christ and opens up their meaning. In other words, the specific consciousness created by, and associated with the work of the Holy Spirit, is not a consciousness of Himself, but a consciousness of *Christ*. He does not function in experience independently of Christ, but all His work and influence is on the basis of the new truths and emotions liberated in the soul by the Saviour (xvi. 14-15).

In all this we have to some extent a reflection of the historical experience of early Christianity. The history of the Christian soul since Christ lights up the meaning of His words. The Church was conscious from the first days of a progressive enlightenment. It was just as sure that this progressive enlightenment was wholly *internal* to the new revelation made in Jesus. It felt that it had in Jesus from the beginning a new experience of the living God which, originating in the convictions and emotions produced by the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus, went on through ever widening circles of thought and discovery to light up the whole area of His purpose and work for the world.

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EXPEDIENCY OF CHRIST'S GOING. (2) THE DAWNING OF A NEW AGE OF FAITH AND PRAYER

The Death of Christ, indeed, is a subject of perplexity and darkness to the disciples. Nevertheless, the distress and anguish are but the birth-throes of a new era. They will pass, and the disciples will see Christ again with a joy which can never more be taken from them. "A little while, and you do not behold Me ; and again a little while, and you will see me" (xvi. 17). This "little while" seems to constitute the point of difficulty for the disciples. The seeing of Jesus again at the last day is an intelligible conception, but the seeing of Him in spirit is beyond their comprehension. Nevertheless, it is this experience which is to constitute a new era of life for those who now share the fellowship of His sufferings. They will see Jesus in spirit, and know that He lives at the right hand of the Father. It is characteristic of the Fourth Gospel that this thought of Christ's coming to His Church in the Spirit, while never explicitly placed in opposition to the apocalyptic vision of His coming with the clouds, actually supersedes it. From the evangelist's point of view the Church's experience of uninterrupted fellowship with the glorified Lord is the essential fulfilment of the apocalyptic prediction of His coming through the rending skies (xvi. 16-22).

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The new era also will be one of prayer in Jesus' name. The disciples will no longer prefer their requests directly to Christ as they did while He was on earth. They will have such a persuasion of the love of God that they will go to the Father Himself with the completest assurance of their prayers being answered. They will pray, however, in Jesus' name, and the new more intimate ground of confidence which this will give will inaugurate a new era in prayer, characterised by a new note of joy. This, too, reflects early Christian experience. All approach to the Father becomes through Christ more personal, more intimate, more familiar, because Christ has opened up the way to God. It is from the Father that He came, and it is to the Father that He goes. All this has lit up the mystery of the Unseen, and brought Heaven near. For the same reason it communicates to prayer a new reality and hope (xvi. 23-28).

Finally, the assurance that Jesus is the way to God, and that they may go direct to the Father with their petitions, removes the last doubts of the followers of Jesus. Hitherto they have clung to Jesus as in some sort a refuge from the *mystery* of God (xiv. 5-11). What has dismayed them is the thought of resuming the task of life with Jesus no longer by their side. Now, however, through the assurance given by Jesus of the Father's love, a new light has dawned on their minds. They can truly

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say that Jesus no longer speaks in figures, but openly and plainly, and they on their part need no longer go to Him with questions (xvi. 29-30). They now see God *through Christ*, and this makes all things new. Even so, their faith is not yet perfect. That very hour is to see them scattered and Jesus left alone, with none but the Father to support Him. Yet this is the hour in which He will utter His *Vici* over the world. And with His victory, theirs is morally assured. All the terrors associated with the world, both as spectacle and as spiritual power, have been overcome by Jesus. By His Cross He conquers, and by His Cross they, too, shall overcome. This should comfort the disciples, and give them peace, amidst the trials to which they will be subjected in the days to come (xvi. 29-33).

THE PRAYER OF JESUS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

The Prayer of Jesus with which the Discourse in the Upper Room concludes stands in a specially close relation to the Atoning Death on the Cross which immediately follows. It reveals Jesus in the character in which He dies, as Priest and Intercessor for the whole community of the faithful throughout the world. In a sense the prayer may be regarded as a Johannine counterpart to the Synoptic prayer in Gethsemane. It is possible to

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find in it an echo or interpretation of the prayer which Jesus taught His disciples. But there is no reason to think that the prayer in John does not rest on reminiscence of an actual prayer of Jesus for His disciples at the last gathering before His death. During the whole period of instruction in the Upper Room the Beloved Disciple is present at Jesus' side. It is undoubtedly to him ultimately that we owe our whole record of these closing hours. The prayer as we have it in John stands in a very intimate relation to the stage of confession to which the disciples had come during these hours. They had acknowledged that the veil which had rested hitherto on their eyes had been taken away, and that they now saw the Father through Christ. The prayer of Jesus takes account of this—compare xvii. 7-8 with xvi. 29-30—and brings within its scope the needs, the trials, the temptations which these believing ones, now cast on faith alone, will meet as they go out into the world.

But first the Saviour prays that the Divine will which has appointed the Cross as the way of glory for Him (iii. 14, viii. 28, xii. 23, 31-32) may be sustained. In life He has made the glory or revelation of the Father His sole object and aim: and now He asks that the Father will "glorify" or reveal the Son in death. To open to all whom God gave to Him the way of eternal life through the knowledge of God and of Himself as God's elect

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Messenger has been the office committed to Him on earth, and this task He has accomplished. He has truly revealed the glory or Name of God to the men whom God called out of the world that they might belong to Himself. Now He prays that in the death to which He goes forward His own name or character as Son of the Father may be sustained. May He be revealed on the Cross (xvii. 1-8).

In the second part of the prayer, Christ prays for the disciples. He is leaving the world, and they who do not belong to the world any more than He, inasmuch as God has given them to Him, are being left behind to carry on His work in a hostile world. In the solemnity of this crisis Christ commits them to the Father, that the Father may keep them in the "Name," which He has given to His Son, i.e., within the sphere and under the power of the new revelation. The acknowledgment of this "Name" is the bond which holds Christ in Heaven and His people on earth together. In His life the preservation of the faithful in the knowledge of God has been successfully accomplished except in the case of the apostate disciple. But now in a world which hates the disciples because they belong to a higher sphere, and yet from which they cannot be taken because it is the field of their labour, it is needful that the Father keep them holy by keeping them within the sphere of "the truth." For the sake of their consecration, and in order to seal by

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blood the new revelation which has been given, Jesus offers Himself a sacrifice to God : " I sanctify Myself," i.e., " I dedicate Myself as oblation on their behalf " (xvii. 9-19).

In the third section of the prayer, the Saviour passes from the immediate circle of the disciples to the wider fellowship of believers which is to arise throughout the world. Here the prayer is for their unity, a unity of all with Him, resembling the mystical unity of the Father and the Son. The Church is to be concentric with the Person of its Lord : " I in them and Thou in Me." But as the Saviour looks forward to the future, His prayer extends to take in the sphere beyond the present world. It is His will ($\theta\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$) that His followers share with Him not only the task of the life here, but the beatific vision of the life hereafter. The Christian doctrine of immortality in the Fourth Gospel ends on the note of the Saviour's will and prayer (xvii. 20-26).

Such is the prayer of Christ as High Priest of His Church. It consists of the three petitions, that the Cross may set forth His Sonship, that His disciples may be kept enduringly under the power of the Name which He has revealed, that the Church may be one with Him in God. The last petition sums up the final appeal of the Christ of the Fourth Gospel. It expresses in a sense the Johannine equivalent of the Synoptic conception of the coming of the

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Kingdom of God. There is nothing that from the world's point of view is less desired than the unity of humanity. The kingdoms of the world have taken their stand on the cynical principle "Divide et impera." They have seen advantage in the permanent disunion of races, peoples and classes. It is another vision which irradiates the Gospels—the oneness of a redeemed humanity, reconciled to the Father through the Son.

CHAPTER IX

The Trial and Death of Christ

THE SHEPHERD TAKEN FROM THE SHEEP

THE arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus are related by the fourth evangelist in general agreement with the Synoptists, but with a few omissions, explanations and amplifications. In the first place, while Jesus and His disciples on leaving the city repair, as in the other Gospels, to the garden beyond the Kidron, the episode of the Agony is omitted; though an echo of it remains in the rebuke administered by Jesus to Peter on the occasion of his collision with Malchus, "The cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?" In the second place, when Judas appears with a cohort of Roman troops and a band of temple-police carrying arms and torches, the evangelist notices that Jesus presented Himself voluntarily, and having given Himself up, asked that His followers might be permitted to go in peace. This dismays His captors, who expected that there would be a scuffle, but it reveals Jesus in His character as the Good Shepherd (x. 11-12), who freely gives His life in defence of His flock (xviii. 1-11).

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THE TRIAL OF JESUS. (1) HIS DOCTRINE NO SECRET MYSTERY

The account of the preliminary hearing of the case before the ex-high priest Annas includes the notice that Jesus was followed to Annas' house not only by Peter but by another disciple, who, being known to the priest, went in with Jesus to the courtyard and afterwards procured entrance for Peter. Whether the unnamed disciple was present at the proceedings within the house, we are not told ; but that he is the authority to whom the evangelist appeals at certain highly important points in his narrative, and that he is invested with a certain superiority to Peter, admits of no manner of doubt. The story of Peter's denial, which follows, is related in fair agreement with the Synoptic account. On the other hand, the trial of Jesus by Annas assumes in John a notably different character. Annas questions Jesus about His disciples and about His teaching, and receives answer from Jesus that both in synagogue and in temple He had spoken publicly to the world. In other words, His disciples are no secret society or organisation, and His teaching contains no undivulged mysteries. Annas may refer to the Jews present for an account of everything that He has said. This reply provokes a blow from one of the temple-police, but Jesus reiterates His statement

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that His whole teaching has been laid before the world (xviii. 12-27).

It is to be noticed that in this account of the trial of Jesus the false charge of blasphemy (Mark xiv. 55-61), the confession by Jesus of His Messiahship (Mark xiv. 61-62), and the prediction of the coming of the Son of Man with the clouds of heaven (Mark xiv. 62) have all disappeared. In the eyes of the fourth evangelist the condemnation of Jesus did not turn on anything brought to light for the first time at His trial, but on the spiritual issues which were created by His teaching from the start. Jesus stands before Annas as *the Light of the World*.

THE TRIAL OF JESUS. (2) HIS KINGDOM NOT OF THIS WORLD

From Annas Jesus is conducted to Caiaphas, and thence without further parley to the Prætorium where Pilate, the Roman procurator, sits to adjudicate cases appealed to him by the Jewish authority. The charge laid by the Jews against their prisoner is general: He is a criminal, and as His crime deserves death according to the Jewish law, they wish Pilate to pronounce sentence. But that Pilate has been independently instructed, and that the Jews have for their own ends given the accusation a *political* turn, appears by the question

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which Pilate now puts to Jesus, "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" What follows in John reads like an explanatory commentary on the trial as narrated in the Synoptic Gospels. In the latter, the answer of Jesus to Pilate is confined to the single word "Thou sayest" (Mark xv. 2), which, while doubtless to be construed as affirmative, places upon the inquisitor the responsibility for all deductions drawn from it, and at the same time forecloses for the present all further discussion. In John this answer is resolved into a question upon Jesus' part whether Pilate honestly desires to know the truth, or confines his magisterial responsibility to the mere handling of a charge preferred by the Jews. Pilate declines personal responsibility on the haughty ground that he is not a Jew, and therefore the statement of Jesus which now follows is probably an answer to the Jewish charge. Jesus is indeed a King, but His Kingdom is not of this world. Had it been of this world, His servants would have organised themselves in self-defence. As it is, His Kingdom has its sanction and origin in a higher sphere. For this reason He can say to Pilate that He is a King, that He was born to be a King, and that He came into the world to be a King, but not in the material sense. Above this world is the world of the spirit which is the only true world, and Jesus came to bear witness of its truth. His Kingdom lies there, and everyone who is of "the truth," everyone who

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has seen and embraced that world of divine realities, owns Him as Lord. Plainly we have here the Johannine statement of Jesus' conception of the Kingdom of God. The distinction between the material and the spiritual world has superseded the Synoptic distinction between the present age and the age to come. This makes a notable difference. An answer turning upon the absolute distinction between the world of appearance and the world of divine reality would be intelligible to Greeks, and to Christians who live no longer after the flesh but after the spirit, but it does not content Jews who do not or will not see any reason to conceive the Kingdom of God as other than terrestrial, and it does not content Pilate who does not believe in any higher world of spirit. What is this "truth" to which Jesus so confidently appeals? To Pilate it is no more than a jest. But just for this reason Jesus' claim to a Kingdom of the Truth does not seem to Pilate to involve any menace to the Roman polity (xviii. 28-40).

THE TRIAL OF JESUS. (3) HIS CROWN A CROWN OF THORNS

The character under which Pilate is presented combines evasion of personal responsibility (xviii. 31, 35 ; xix. 6) with scepticism in regard to the world

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of higher values (xviii. 38). An interesting commentary on the latter weakness is furnished by the letter of Agrippa I, quoted by Philo, which speaks of the bribery, rapine, and outrage, the cruel and incessant murders, which disgraced Pilate's official administration.¹ But while the fourth evangelist exposes him in all his weakness, he to a certain extent exonerates him by the emphasis with which he declares that the real guilt for the death of Jesus lies at the door of the Jews. Again and again Pilate is made to protest that Jesus is in his judgment innocent (xviii. 38 ; xix. 4, 6, 12). He allows Jesus indeed to be scourged and mocked by the soldiers, but when he hears the charge against Jesus formulated as that of claiming to be the *Son of God*, a sudden emotion of fear seizes him, and to this extent he appears in a more favourable light than the cold-blooded Jewish prosecutors (xix. 7-8). Finally, it is only when a political complexion is put by the Jews upon the indictment against their prisoner that Pilate gives way. And even then he reserves the right to state the claim of Jesus objectively, and in his own manner (xix. 19-22). In all this Pilate is interpreted as a real, albeit a most unworthy, witness to the truth of Christ's Messiahship (xix. 1-22).

This comes out particularly in the scene where Pilate produces the thorn-crowned Jesus before the Jews with the remark, "Behold the Man." As

¹ Philo, *de Legat*, 38.

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Caiaphas by his counsel to the Sanhedrin involuntarily admitted the necessity of Christ's atoning death, so Pilate by sanctioning the mockery and scorn of the soldiers expedites the Divine purpose of presenting Jesus to the world in the character and lineaments in which He is to dominate future history. He pulls the curtain aside, so to speak, and we see Jesus wearing His regalia :

"Yea, a crown in very surety,
But of thorns."

As He comes forth in the crown and purple robe, there is a momentary lull in the storm of hatred, the mists divide, and the truth appears. It is indeed thus, as sin-bearing Martyr, that Jesus is King. Then the fury of the accusers rises again to a roar : "To the cross with Him, to the cross." The Jews can see no analogy between the thorn-crowned figure and the Messiah. Pilate, whose mind is not walled round by Jewish tradition, is not so sure that Jesus is not right in His plea against the nation. The word "Son of God" has filled his mind with fears. Then Jewish subtlety comes to the aid of Tiberius' magistrate. It is pointedly represented to Pilate that if he acquits Jesus, he is not the friend of Cæsar, for "everyone who makes himself a king opposes Cæsar." This consideration is decisive. The malignity of the Jewish prosecution heaps on the

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thorn-crowned Jesus the political attributes which He had expressly disowned. The hatred and treason against Cæsar, which are here alleged, belonged to His accusers, not to Him. But in their greater hatred against Jesus, they see a momentary means of absolving themselves with Cæsar, and they lay their own sins, the sins of the nation, on Christ. When Pilate asks, "Shall I crucify your King?" the priests answer, "We have no king but Cæsar." This settles it. In that answer the evangelist sees the final repudiation by Judaism of its Messianic hope. The Jews make their choice of Cæsar, and the sun of the national hope goes down in blood, the blood of Jesus.

Nevertheless Pilate adheres to the inscription which he has resolved to place on the Cross: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Contempt for the Jews, to whom he had weakly yielded, doubtless inspired this last effort to conserve his independence of judgment, but, as the evangelist sees it, it was necessary that some check should be administered to Judaism, and that through the Roman authority an unprejudiced statement of the fact of Jesus' Messiahship should be given to the world (xix. 1-16).

THE LAST WORDS AND DEATH ON THE CROSS

The Fourth Gospel makes no mention of Simon of Cyrene as helping Jesus to bear His Cross to the

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place of execution (xix. 17). Those who have thought it necessary to assign a reason for this omission point to the later Gnostic contention that it was not Christ but Simon who really suffered on the Cross (Iren. I. xxiv. 4), and think that the evangelist was already guarding against the emergence of such ideas. The parting of Jesus' garments is related as by the Synoptists, except that it is stated that the chiton or tunic of Jesus was woven in a single piece (xix. 23-24). Beyond doubt the evangelist sees some symbolic meaning in this circumstance, though whether it has anything to do with Philo's comparison of the high priest's robe to the vesture of the Logos is more than doubtful. The part played by the conception of the Logos in the Fourth Gospel is, once the Prologue is past, too slight to justify our thinking that the evangelist goes out of his way to institute analogies between any of the forms of the Logos-speculation and the history of Jesus.

The evangelist's account of the women who stood by the Cross—Mark says that they were watching from a distance—differs from the Synoptists' by the inclusion among them of the mother of Jesus. He also records the presence of the Beloved Disciple, and describes how Jesus consigned to him the care of His mother. In view of the fact that the tradition here followed can only have come from the Disciple himself, the incident cannot well be treated as figurative, as though it signified that with the death

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of Christ the trust for the sacred interests of the mother-Church of Israel passed into the keeping of the followers of the Crucified (xix. 25-27).

In John also—as in Luke—the last cry on the cross “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Mark xv. 34, Matt. xxvii. 46) is omitted, and the offer of the vinegar, which in Mark and Matthew is made in response to that cry, takes place in answer to the word “I thirst.” And even this word, uttered at the moment when Jesus knows that “All is finished,” is spoken only that Scripture may be fulfilled. Throughout the Johannine narrative the control of everything rests with the Crucified Himself. He has foreseen everything, and willed everything in accordance with the Father’s purpose. By the emphasis which he lays on this, the evangelist breaks up the dark shadows of the Synoptic narrative. Like Luke, he omits the cry of desolation lest it should seem to involve an element of the unexpected in the last agony, or to suggest a dereliction of the Saviour which did not correspond with the actual fact (cp. viii. 29, xvi. 32). The word, “It is finished,” which is the last utterance of the Crucified in the Johannine Gospel, emphasises how completely the dying Lord maintained the consciousness of fulfilling to the last syllable of life the will of His Father (xix. 28-30).

One of the most mystical passages in the Fourth Gospel now follows. When one of the soldiers

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pierced the side of the dead Saviour with a spear, "blood and water issued." This is solemnly asseverated on the authority of an eye-witness who was present, and who can be no other than the Beloved Disciple mentioned as standing by the cross in verse 26 : this witness "has declared his evidence, and his evidence is true." But what is the meaning of the corroborative statement which follows : "And he"—literally "that one" (*ἐκεῖνος*)—"knows that he is telling the truth ?" Who is the *ἐκεῖνος* in question ? If it is God who is referred to, as Dr. Moffat assumes in his translation, the evangelist is in effect declaring upon oath the truth of the witness's statement, and in that case it would be possible to argue that the evangelist and the witness are one and the same person. But the reference of *ἐκεῖνος* to God seems strained and unnatural, and therefore it is better to see here an allusion to the witness himself, who in that case is distinguished from the evangelist. This witness is now dead, but like John the Baptist (i. 15) he has made his testimony for all time, and the evangelist, who elsewhere undoubtedly leans on him for particular statements, now appeals to his unquestionable authority for the fact asserted in verse 34 that "blood and water" issued from the Saviour's side. Here we may leave aside the physiological difficulties under which the statement in question labours. The issuing of water as well as blood, if intended to

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be taken literally, at once stamps the phenomenon as miraculous. But it need not be supposed that the original witness was primarily concerned with the objective character of what he beheld. He was giving an interpretation of Jesus' death in its religious aspect. He was giving a *mystical* analysis of the blood of Jesus, and it is upon this mystical analysis that the evangelist fastens. The latter sees in the testimony of the witness the corroboration of the principle elsewhere maintained by him that "Jesus came by water and blood," i.e., Jesus was divinely attested both at His baptism and on His cross, and therefore both sacraments of the Church bear witness to Him. In the present passage the evangelist is thinking of Christ on the Cross as the source of the grace of both sacraments. It is from His side that there flow to the Church the cleansing signified in Baptism and the atonement proclaimed by the Eucharist (xix. 31-37).

The closing verses of the chapter include the notice that the anointing of the body of Jesus which, according to the Synoptic records, was to have been carried out by the women on the day following the Sabbath (Mark xvi. 1-2 ; Luke xxiii. 56 ; xxiv. 1), took place on the evening of the Crucifixion day at the hands of Joseph of Arimathæa and of the Nicodemus who once came to Jesus by night.

CHAPTER X

The Resurrection

APPEARANCE OF THE RISEN LORD TO MARY MAGDALENE

IN John, as in the Synoptic Gospels, the Resurrection Appearances of Jesus are preceded by the finding of the empty grave. But whereas, according to the Synoptists, the discovery is made by a group of women, in John only one, Mary of Magdala, is mentioned, though the terms of her report "*We* do not know where they have laid him" indicate the presence to the evangelist's mind of a plurality of witnesses. At the tidings brought by Mary, Peter and "the other disciple whom Jesus loved" set out in haste for the grave, and the last-named arrives first. In this statement, and in what follows, we are conscious of a distinct intention on the evangelist's part to push to the front the authority and claims of the unnamed disciple. Not only does this disciple arrive at the empty tomb before Peter, but afterwards, when both enter into the place, while Peter merely "beholds," the other

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disciple "both saw and believed." This is plainly symptomatic of the evangelist's attitude to the Beloved Disciple. He claims for the latter at this moment a certain precedence over Peter, and it may be that by such hints he is bespeaking for his own Gospel, which is based on the witness of the Beloved Disciple, at least as high an authority as that which attaches to the "Petrine" tradition followed by Mark and the other Synoptists. The evangelist is frank enough, indeed, to point out that at this moment neither Peter nor the other disciple "knew the Scripture, that Christ must rise from the dead." Both needed ocular proof of the event, and this they received together at the empty tomb. But of the two it was the unnamed disciple who first realised the truth of the Resurrection. He believes in the fact before Peter does, and before the Risen Lord has appeared to any one, even to the women (xx. 1-10).

Now however follows the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene, as she still stands sobbing by the grave. Her grief is that the Lord has been stolen away to some place unknown. In the Synoptic narratives an angel, or angels, appearing in the tomb, announce to the women that the Lord is risen. Here the angels, who appear to Mary, merely ask "Why weepest thou?" and the revelation of the Resurrection is left to the Lord Himself. At the word, "Why weepest thou?" Mary turns and sees

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a stranger. The greeting "Mary" disarms her first thought that this is only the gardener, and in a tumult of joyous recognition she exclaims "My Master." It is clear that in this passage the fourth evangelist, while following a separate source, has in mind the familiar features of the tradition known to us from the Synoptics. For what is the meaning of Jesus' words to Mary, "Touch Me not, for I have not yet ascended to My Father?" There has been no mention of any impulsive act on Mary's part, but the evangelist has in mind the passionate emotion with which, according to the ordinary tradition, the women clasped and sought to hold the Saviour's feet (Matt. xxviii. 9). The words "Touch me not" indicate that the Resurrection of Jesus is not to a life on earth, but to a place at the Father's side. The vision of Himself granted to Mary on earth is but a moment in His "ascension" to His proper sphere. The true content of the Resurrection-vision, therefore, which Mary is to report to the brethren, is that Jesus is on His way to His Father and theirs, and to His God and theirs (Cp. xiv. 4, 28; xvi. 5, 17, 28). The relations established by the Resurrection between Jesus and His own do not belong to the terrestrial, but to the heavenly plane of life and experience (xx. 11-18).

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APPEARANCES TO THE DISCIPLES AND TO THOMAS

The original text of Mark breaks off with the announcement of the angels to the women at the empty grave (Mark xvi. 1-8). But by sundry indications (cp. Mark xiv. 27-28 ; xvi. 7) it can be made out clearly that in his lost ending Mark recorded an appearance of Jesus to the Eleven in *Galilee*. In this he was followed by Matthew who, after the appearance of Jesus to the women, records only one other appearance, viz., to the Eleven on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. xxviii. 16-20). In Luke, on the other hand, three appearances are mentioned, one to Peter, which is merely alluded to (Luke xxiv. 34), one to the two disciples at Emmaus (xxiv. 13-31), and one to the Eleven (xxiv. 36-51), and these all take place in *Jerusalem* or in its neighbourhood. The fourth evangelist agrees with Luke in his narrative of Jesus' appearance to the "disciples." The scene is Jerusalem, a room with closed doors, where the disciples have gathered for fear of the Jews. John does not record that the disciples were terrified at the sudden appearance of the Lord, or that they thought they saw a spirit (Luke xxiv. 37), but the idea is present to his mind, for he represents the Risen One as showing the disciples His hands and His side, thus reassuring them. But while corporeality in some sense is

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thus claimed for the form in which the Risen Lord appeared, the account in John is notably less materialistic than that in Luke, for there is no mention of Jesus taking and eating food in the presence of His disciples. To this appearance of Jesus to the Eleven is now subjoined in John, as in Luke and Matthew, the giving of the apostolic commission. It takes the simple form "As the Father sent Me, I am sending you." But to this the Fourth Gospel adds two exceptional features.

First, the evangelist states that Jesus breathed on the company, and said "Receive the Holy Spirit." If these words mean anything, they mean that here we have the Johannine counterpart to, or version of the Lucan narrative of the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost (Luke xxiv. 49, Acts ii. 1f.). The Fourth Gospel thus directly associates the gift of the Spirit with the Resurrection-experiences of the apostolic society. And in this it is undoubtedly right. The vision of the Risen Jesus marked the beginning of that new direct experience of the living God which is what the Church meant when it spoke of the advent of the Spirit.

Secondly, the nature of the commission to the apostles is given in the words "If you remit the sins of any, remitted are they; if you retain them, they are retained." This represents the Johannine understanding of "the power of the keys," which according to Matt. xvi. 19 was conferred on Peter

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as representative of the apostles. The evangelist is thinking of the charge to "bind" and to "loose," which in the Matthew passage does not apply exclusively to the forgiveness or non-forgiveness of sins, but takes in the whole task of declaring the will and word of God to the Church. Here, however,—and we may compare Matt. xviii. 18—the evangelist translates the commission into terms of granting or withholding forgiveness. Such a responsibility is indeed inseparable from the ministry of reconciliation with which the disciples are entrusted (2 Cor. v. 18-21). It should be noted that this is the only passage in the Fourth Gospel in which forgiveness of sins is alluded to. As regards sins for which there is no forgiveness, the Gospel already contains the statement that Pharisaic self-sufficiency acts as a permanent barrier to the removal of moral and spiritual imperfections. The Pharisees involve themselves in a sin which forever cleaves to them (xx. 19-23).

The fact that in xx. 17 the Risen Jesus does not permit Mary to touch Him because He has not yet ascended to the Father, whereas later in verses 20 and 27 He not only shows the disciples His hands and His side, but offers them to be handled, has seemed to some scholars an indication that between the appearance to Mary and the appearance to the Eleven the evangelist conceives the Ascension to have taken place. On this interpretation it is the

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ascended Lord who here descends again to earth to appear in the midst of His disciples. With this would agree the fact that Jesus on this occasion confers on the disciples the gift of the Spirit. According to xiv. 16-17 and xvi. 7 this gift was to be conditional upon His previous Ascension to the Father.

The appearance of the Risen Lord to Thomas is peculiar to the Fourth Gospel. Thomas who has already figured in its pages as prone to many doubts and fears (xi. 16, xiv. 5) is stated to have been absent when the Lord appeared to the Apostles. And not only did he not believe in the truth of their report, but he declared that sense-evidence alone would convince him that the Lord had risen. According to the evangelist Thomas received this evidence a week later, i.e., on the next Lord's Day, and was led to the confession "My Lord and My God!" But he also received the rebuke "Because thou hast seen Me, hast thou believed? Blessed are those who have believed, without having seen" (xx. 24-29).

Certain difficulties attach to the historical interpretation of this episode. Thus it has been thought by some that in the narrative, as it stands before us, two stages or strata of tradition are to be distinguished: an earlier, according to which Thomas was led to faith, not by ocular, but by spiritual evidence, and thus illustrated in himself the blessedness of these who, *having not seen*, have

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believed ; a later, which added the feature of sense-perception, and made this the means by which Thomas' conversion was brought about. The argument advanced in support of this view is that in the existing narrative there does not appear any very close connection between the ocular demonstration granted to Thomas and the moral appended in the words "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed." But while there may be much that is not clear with regard to the original form of the narrative, there is no question as to the truth which through the incident the evangelist desires to bring home to the Church. It is clearly stated in the closing words, Christ's blessing on those who have not seen. There are those who, like Thomas, ask for outward and visible proofs of the Resurrection and other holy mysteries of faith. Such should realise that there is a higher, a *spiritual* evidence which does not depend on sight or sense, and to experience this and to respond to it is more blessed than to have had the ocular demonstration which apostles enjoyed. The Spirit bears witness to the fact that Jesus lives. He who has this evidence will not crave to walk by sight. Even the fact that the Risen One granted extraordinary manifestations of Himself to the Apostles whom He had chosen must be subordinated in the last analysis to the existence of a higher demonstration which is not after the flesh but after the Spirit (xx. 24-29).

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THE CONCLUDING CHAPTER

It is generally assumed that Chap. xxi. is a later addition or appendix to the Fourth Gospel, and comes to us from another hand than the evangelist's. The first, and undoubtedly most serious, reason for separating it from the rest of the book is the character of the closing sentences of Chap. xx., which seem to indicate that here the evangelist lays down his pen, having completed his narrative of the "signs" by which Jesus on earth proved Himself to be the Son of God and source of eternal life to men (xx. 30-31). It is surprising after these words to find a further record of post-resurrection appearances, all the more so as the closing words to Thomas seem to indicate that the era of visible proofs of the Resurrection now breaks off, and a new era of faith without sight begins. Moreover, nothing in Chap. xx. has prepared us for the abrupt change of scene from Jerusalem to Galilee, or for the appearance of the disciples there, or for their resumption of fishing on the lake. The traditions embodied in Chap. xxi. stand in no clear connection with what has gone before.

None of these arguments, however, amount to an absolute proof that Chap. xxi. was not written by the same hand as the rest of the Gospel. The style and tone of the chapter are indistinguishable from

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that of the rest of the work. The possibility cannot therefore be absolutely excluded that the evangelist originally intended to end his work at xx. 31, and afterwards added a number of other materials relating to the post-resurrection period, without, however, making very clear the connection in which they stand with what precedes.

APPEARANCE OF THE RISEN LORD TO THE DISCIPLES AND TO PETER IN GALILEE

A very great uncertainty attaches to the original context of the tradition recorded by the evangelist in xxi. 1-19. The incident in question bears a very striking resemblance to one which Luke assigns to an early period in Jesus' ministry (Luke v. 1-11). In both cases a wonderful catch of fish, brought about after a night of failure through faith in Jesus' word, is followed by a call of Peter to the work of an apostle. It is possible, therefore, that the two records are simply variant forms of one and the same original tradition. But whereas Luke understood the tradition to refer to Peter's *original* calling as an apostle, the writer of John xxi., following other sources, interpreted the tradition correctly as an account of an appearance of the *Risen* Lord to Peter (cp. 1 Cor. xv. 5; Mark xiv. 28; xvi. 7). The question would then arise whether, as the presence

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of the Beloved Disciple in this chapter seems to hint, the evangelist received the tradition in this context and with this interpretation from the lips of that Disciple. This view, credible in itself, seems, in the light of verses 20-23, almost irresistible. On the other hand, it is always possible that the Disciple may have in his teaching taken an incident, belonging to the Galilean ministry of Jesus, and used it to bring out truths which the *Risen* Christ had taught His Church since the Resurrection. Thus through the application made of it by his primary authority the evangelist may have come to treat the incident as part of the post-resurrection history.

However that may be, it is in order to bring out the force of truths delivered by the Risen Lord to His Church that the evangelist uses the incident. The presence to his mind of a symbolic purpose and meaning in the incident comes out in features like the command of Jesus to the disciples to cast the net on "the right side of the boat" (xxi. 6), and the statement that the catch included "a hundred and fifty-three" fishes (xxi. 11). It may be assumed that both of these features would suggest definite ideas to the evangelist's readers, though what their precise significance was is not indicated. As regards the second, the zoologist Oppianus Cilix who wrote in the time of Marcus Aurelius estimated the total number of species of fish in the sea as

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one hundred and fifty-three.¹ If we might take this reckoning as familiar, we might interpret the fishing on the lake to mean that, as soon as the apostolic net is at the command of the Risen Lord cast on the right side of the boat, it includes in its catch men of every tribe and nation. As to the other point, the command to cast on *the right side of the boat*, reference may be made to the fact that at an early period of its history the Church was led to turn its attention from the Jewish nation to the wider Gentile world, and it may be that the evangelist is thinking of this wider mission when he represents the Risen Lord as giving the command in question.

If the incident is taken literally, it will mean that after Jesus' death the disciples resumed their former occupation of fishing on the Galilean lake, and that a revelation of the Risen Lord directed them once and for all to give up that kind of fishing, and to go after the souls of men (cp. Mark i. 16-17).

If on the other hand the incident is, as many believe, intended to be understood symbolically, it may be taken as the record of a momentous decision to which the apostolic community came in the period following the resurrection. The ship is the Church. The fishing on the lake is the apostolic preaching of the Gospel. The apostles have toiled in vain because they have been confining their efforts to the winning of the *Jews*, which was the task

¹ Jerome, Commentary on Ezekiel, xlviii. 10.

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committed to them by the Lord on earth (Matt. x. 5-6, 23). But now in the age after the Resurrection, the Risen Lord appears to them, directs them to cast the net on the other side, i.e., to go to the *Gentiles*, and they succeed marvellously. In other words, the Church of the Resurrection becomes through revelation a missionary Church. If there is any justification for this interpretation, it helps to explain why the evangelist has reserved for his closing chapter the symbolic incident of the Draught of Fishes. He sees in it a direct reflection of the experience of the Church in its first period, and particularly of its realisation of a mission to go into all the world and make disciples of all the nations (cp. Matt. xxviii. 19-20).

THE APOSTOLIC CHARGE TO PETER

In John, as in Luke v. 8-10, the Apostolic Calling of Peter follows immediately on the miraculous Draught of Fishes. Only, in accordance with the post-resurrection setting of the event in John, the penitence of the disciple is brought into immediate relation with his recent denial of Christ. Peter, according to the Synoptic tradition, had professed a greater love and loyalty to his Master than the other disciples (Mark xiv. 29; Matt. xxvi. 33), and yet afterwards he had denied Him thrice

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over. Now Jesus, appearing to Him in Galilee, asks Peter if he indeed loves Him more than the other disciples, and on receiving repeated protestations of love from the penitent apostle, who will no longer institute comparisons between himself and other followers of Jesus, directs him thrice over to feed or shepherd His "lambs." The triple command is clearly motivated by the triple denial of which Peter had been guilty, and indicates the direction in which Peter is to work out a genuine repentance. Too much should not be made of the interchange of two different Greek terms for "love" in the dialogue between Master and disciple. To say that Jesus twice asks for a love that deeply, intelligently appreciates the object of its devotion, and that Peter twice replies with protestations of ardent affection, exaggerates sensibly the difference of colour between the two terms ἀγαπᾶν and φιλεῖν. It is interesting, however, that on the third occasion the Master accepts the terms used by the penitent, and on the strength of his offered love sends him to take charge of His lambs.

Taking the section xxi. 1-17 as a whole, then, we may conclude that a tradition describing a wonderful Catch of Fishes on the lake, followed by a confession of sins by Peter and his call to be an apostle—a tradition which in other quarters, as we see by Luke, was understood to refer to an earlier episode in Peter's career—was, probably through the

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use made of it on former occasions by the Beloved Disciple, rightly interpreted by our evangelist as part of the post-resurrection history, as in fact a record of Jesus' appearance to Peter in Galilee. In accordance with this setting of the tradition, the evangelist probably construed the first item—the miracle on the lake—as a direction to the apostles to go with the Gospel to the whole world, so that this passage in John becomes the counterpart to Matt. xxviii. 19-20. The other item—the call of the penitent Peter to apostleship—he interprets as the restoration of Peter to grace after his denial of Christ, and therefore he adds to it other material relating to that restoration.

The charge to Peter is followed by a prediction of the Lord with regard to Peter's latter end. The time was to come when, no longer able freely to choose and see his way as in youth, the apostle would stretch his hands out for others to "gird" him, and to lead him where he had no wish to go. He who had once been self-willed and impetuous would, after a life spent in service, supply a noble example of self-surrender, dying like his Master on the cross (xxi. 18-19).

THE BELOVED DISCIPLE

To the allusion to Peter's future is subjoined a notice of certain words which Jesus spoke with

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reference to the Beloved Disciple who occupies so prominent a place in the pages of the Fourth Gospel. The evangelist assigns these words to the same period as the prediction of Peter's martyrdom. Peter, being commanded by the Lord to "follow" Him, catches sight of the Beloved Disciple coming up, and says, "Lord, and what about him?" To which the Lord replied, "If I will that he remain until I come, what is that to thee?" The contrast of ideas here is obvious. Peter is to "follow" Christ in the sense of taking the path to martyrdom, but as regards the Beloved Disciple it remains an open question whether the Lord does not intend that he shall live until His return.

The evangelist explains that this word of Jesus caused a report to go abroad among the brethren that the disciple in question was not to die, but he adds that this was erroneous. Jesus did not expressly say that the disciple was not to die; He only said that the issue of His own will with regard to the disciple's survival was no concern of Peter (xxi. 20-23).

It is obvious that the purpose of this section is to correct the erroneous opinion that the Beloved Disciple would live to see the Return of Christ. The natural *locus* of this opinion would be a quarter of the Church in which the disciple was specially known and revered. It is plain that, before the evangelist wrote, the disciple had survived to so great

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an age, as compared with all his contemporaries, that the popular impression seemed likely to be fulfilled. It is equally plain that he was now dead, for only so can we explain the writer's concern to point out the unfoundedness of the impression in question. What was the origin of the belief in the disciple's survival? If we might legitimately carry it back to some earlier and more general utterance of Jesus than the word in the present passage, we might point either to the prediction in Mark ix. 1, "There are some of those standing here who will not taste death till they see the Kingdom of God come with power," or to the saying in John i. 51, "*You (plur.) will see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending to the Son of Man.*" The last prediction was addressed to Nathanael, but, as the plural shows, it had reference to all the disciples present. If now, on the basis of either word, the belief sprang up that some of the original company of disciples would live to see the literal fulfilment of the prophecy of Christ, and if, as time went on, the members of the original circle slipped away one by one till the Beloved Disciple alone remained, we can easily understand that the expectation of his survival till the Parousia had become a practical certainty among all who knew him.

In the light of the practically unanimous tradition of the second century, which connects the John of the Fourth Gospel with Ephesus, there can be no

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doubt as to the quarter of the Church in which the above expectation flourished. It was Ephesus or Asia, and therefore it is with the Church in these parts that the writer identifies himself in verse 24.

But what is the meaning of this verse? It runs: "This" (i.e., the Beloved Disciple) "is he who testifies concerning these things, and we" (i.e., the elders or members of the Church of Ephesus or Asia) "know that his testimony is true." If, as is generally assumed, "these things" means the whole Gospel up to this point, the writer of the verse is clearly not the evangelist. He is one who in the name of the Ephesian community issues the Gospel, and bespeaks for it the authority which is due to its source. But since the Gospel, judged by such evidence as the appeal in xix. 35, does not appear to have been *composed* by the Beloved Disciple, but only to be founded on his testimony, it is not altogether easy to acquiesce in the above view. If "these things" means the whole Gospel, the statement that the Disciple "wrote" them must be interpreted with some latitude. He can only have written the Gospel in the sense of having furnished the materials out of which it was composed.

The alternative is to take the expression "these things" in a limited sense as applying merely to the facts stated in verses 20-23. The meaning will then be that the Beloved Disciple had during his life placed on record, among other matters, an

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explanation of the Lord's words about his future. In this case there will be no bar against regarding the evangelist as the writer of verses 23 and 24. Identifying himself with the whole Ephesian or Asiatic community, he reminds his readers in how close a relation the Gospel, which he now issues to the Church, stands to the authority and testimony of the great Teacher, once disciple of the Lord on earth, who had lived and laboured at Ephesus, and whom the Church knew as "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

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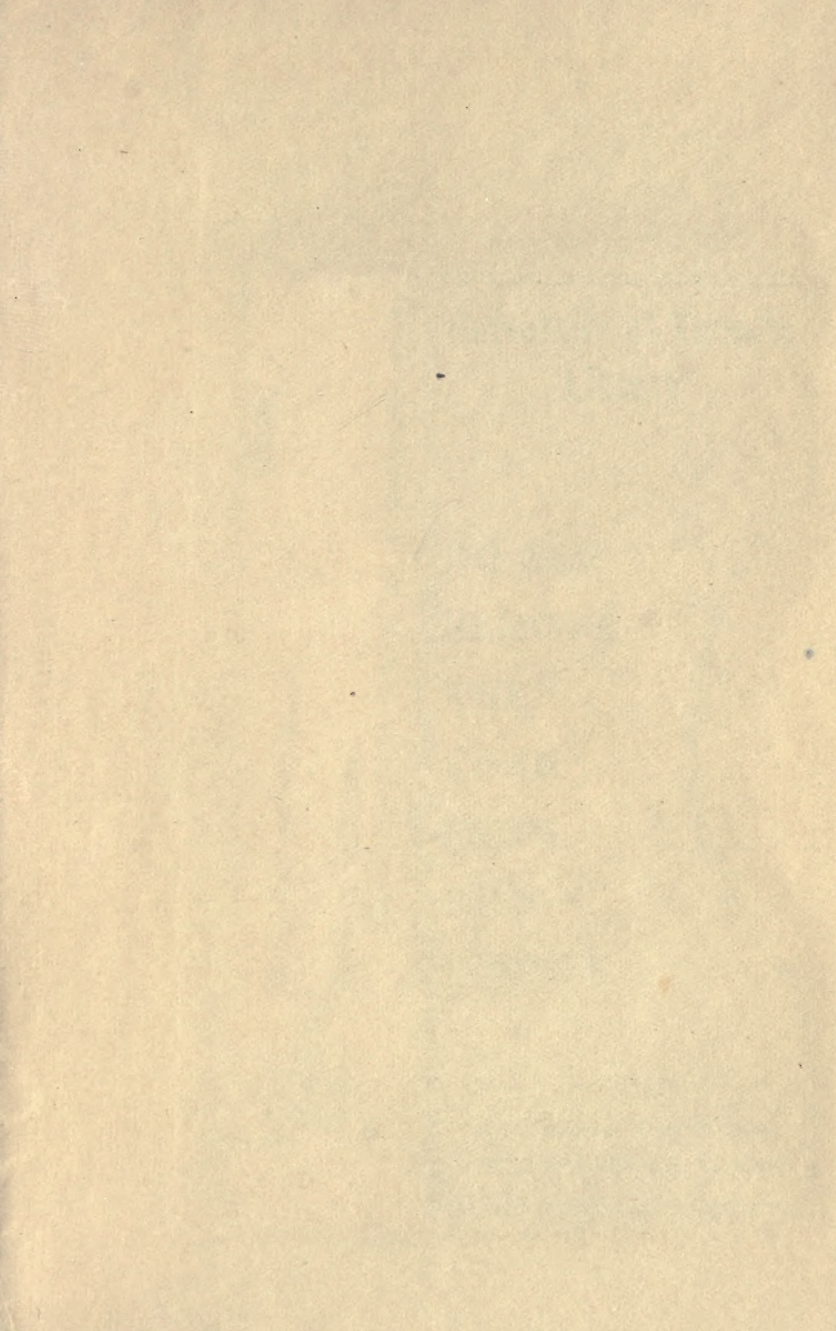
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